‘FORC’D TO LIMB MY OWN CHILD’:

NATHANIEL LEE’S REUSE OF *THE MASSACRE OF PARIS* IN *THE PRINCESS OF CLEVE* AND *THE DUKE OF GUISE*

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the ways in which the Restoration dramatist Nathaniel Lee reuses his banned history play *The Massacre of Paris* in both his bawdy comedy *The Princess of Cleve* and the politically controversial drama *The Duke of Guise*, which was written in collaboration with the Poet Laureate John Dryden. Chapter 1 presents a brief biography of Lee and situates the three plays within their historical context; it concludes with a literature review. Chapter 2 examines Lee's adaptation of Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France* in *The Massacre of Paris*. Contrary to the prevailing critical view of the work as simplistic anti-Catholic propaganda, the play is shown to be a complex and nuanced tragedy. Chapter 3 demonstrates for the first time that Lee constructs his parts of *The Duke of Guise* to recreate the emotional orchestration of *The Massacre of Paris*, thus circumventing the ban upon that play in order to bring a similar work to the stage. Informed by the study of Lee's methods of adaptation presented in Chapters 2 and 3, Chapter 4 examines the printed text of *The Princess of Cleve* and proposes a reconstruction of the non-extant performance text which incorporates reused material from *The Massacre of Paris*. This material is shown to be the mechanism by which Lee converts Lafayette's romantic novel *La Princesse de Clèves* into a comedy. Chapter 5 surveys Lee's career over the decade which elapsed between the banning of *The Massacre of Paris* and the play's first performance. It presents evidence which suggests that the repeated recycling of the text was driven by Lee's response to his changing circumstances, rather than being an indicator of his declining mental health. The interconnection and unusual construction of the three plays examined in this thesis are shown to support Lee's claim to be an innovator of the Restoration stage, demonstrating that he continually sought new ways to create theatre which evokes a powerful emotional response from audiences.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims of this thesis

This thesis examines how the Restoration dramatist Nathaniel Lee reworks material from his 1679 tragedy *The Massacre of Paris* into both his bawdy comedy *The Princess of Cleve* (written c.1680, printed 1689) and his collaboration with John Dryden, the politically controversial drama *The Duke of Guise* (1683). All three plays are based upon seventeenth-century sources, identified previously by Van Lennep (1933). Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France* (1678) was Lee's main source for both *The Massacre of Paris* and *The Duke of Guise*; *The Princess of Cleve* was based upon Madame de Lafayette's 1678 novel *La Princesse de Clèves*. Although the reuse of material from *The Massacre of Paris* has been documented previously by Van Lennep (1933) and examined superficially by others, no study has explored in depth how and why Lee recycled the play in this way. Hence, using a methodology which combines close reading with historical scholarship, this thesis will investigate the ways in which Lee creates new texts by adapting both his own work and that of others and consider Lee's motivation for recycling *The Massacre of Paris* in subsequent plays.

This thesis comprises five chapters. In this chapter, Section 1.2 will provide a brief biography of Lee and summarise the textual history of his plays. Section 1.3 will present the historical context of the three plays considered in this study. The chapter concludes with a literature review in Section 1.4. Chapter 2 examines *The Massacre of Paris*, the core text of this thesis, exploring Lee's adaptation of Davila's *History* to make up the play; it considers whether the play's reputation as a work of simplistic anti-Catholic propaganda is justified. Chapter 3

investigates how Lee constructs his parts of the co-written *The Duke of Guise* by combining the adaptation of Davila's *History* with a significant amount of recycled text from *The Massacre of Paris*. Informed by this, Chapter 4 proposes a reconstruction of the non-extant performance text of *The Princess of Cleve* which reinstates the reused material from *The Massacre of Paris* cut by Lee when the comedy was printed nine years after it was staged. Finally, Chapter 5 will consider Lee's reasons for repeatedly recycling a single work and reflect upon what this study reveals about Lee's working methods.

1.2 Biography and textual background

Nathaniel Lee (c.1648 – 1692) was one of the more prolific dramatists of the latter half of the Restoration period. Between 1675 and 1684, he wrote eleven plays, plus another two in collaboration with John Dryden, then Poet Laureate. Lee's most successful plays, *Sophonisba* (1676) and *Theodosius* (1680), remained popular throughout the eighteenth century, while *The Rival Queens* (1677) continued to appear well into the first half of the nineteenth century (Stroup and Cooke, 1955 [1968], Vol. 1, p.1), and spawned parodies and burlesques (Vernon, 1970, pp.xvi-xvii). However, Lee's work fell out of fashion and his plays are now staged rarely, if at all, while scholarship focuses intermittently on a small sample of his work, and the remainder slip from the canon.

Lee was educated at Charterhouse and Trinity College, Cambridge. He is said to have been brought to London in the entourage of the Duke of Buckingham, who then lost interest in his protégé (Armistead, 1979, pp.20-21). Possessed of a fine speaking voice (Cibber, 1740, pp.95-96), Lee joined the Duke's Company as an actor, appearing in Nevil Payne's *The Fatal Jealousie* (1672) and as Duncan in Davenant's adaptation of *Macbeth* (1672/73), but acute

stage fright 'ruined him for an Actor' (Downes, 1708 [1987], pp.72-73). He then turned to writing; his first play, *The Tragedy of Nero, Emperour of Rome*, was performed in 1674. Writing for the King's Company, Lee produced a play a year and became increasingly successful and well-connected. His friendship with John Dryden resulted in a prolonged exchange of complimentary poems, prologues and epilogues (Armistead, 1979, p.22) and in 1678 Dryden invited Lee to collaborate with him on a version of *Oedipus*. With this play, both Dryden and Lee defected to the rival Duke's Company, in breach of their contracts (Stroup and Cooke, 1955 [1968], Vol.1, p.13). Lee's emotionally intense, action-packed plays pleased audiences greatly, and were said to be particularly popular with women: 'his Tragedies… have forc'd Tears from the fairest Eyes in the World: his Muse indeed seem'd destin'd for the Diversion of the Fair Sex' (Langbaine, 1691 [1971], p.321). However, contemporary critics deplored Lee's emotive dramatic style:

> When we observe how little notice is taken of the noble and sublime Thoughts and Expressions of Mr. *Dryden* in *Oedipus*, and what Applause is given to the Rants and the Fustian of Mr. *Lee*, what can we say, but that Madmen are only fit to write, when nothing is esteem'd Great and Heroick but what is un-intelligible.

(Granville, 1698, preface to *Heroick Love*).

Lee's behaviour became increasingly erratic and on 11 November 1684 he was admitted as a lunatic to Bethlem Royal Hospital, commonly known as Bedlam. He was discharged on 23 April 1688, remaining under the care of his doctor (Stroup and Cooke, 1955 [1968], Vol.1, p.17), and received a pension of ten shillings a week from the Theatre Royal (Armistead, 1979, p.24). There is no surviving evidence that Lee wrote any new plays after his release. However, Lee did continue to write to some extent, producing a celebratory poem to mark the coronation of William and Mary in 1689. His final known work is the brief but moving elegy to the dramatist Aphra Behn, 'On the Death of Mrs Behn' (1689). The last years of Lee's life

are undocumented. He was found dead in the street and was buried at St Clement Danes, London, on 6 May 1692.

None of Lee's plays exist in manuscript. The eighteenth-century antiquarian William Oldys refers to a collection of manuscripts in the possession of Lee's brother John, but these have since been lost (Armistead, 1979, p.25). The only example of a printed text corrected by Lee is the first quarto edition of *The Tragedy of Nero* (1674) held by the Bodleian Library. This is believed to be a copy given by the author to the Earl of Rochester, with corrections in Lee's hand (Stroup and Cooke, 1955 [1968], Vol.1, p.23).

Few of Lee's plays are even in print at the time of writing. The only comparatively modern edition of Lee's complete works is the two-volume collection edited by Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968]), widely regarded as the definitive text for all of Lee's plays and occasional poems in most subsequent criticism. This edition is referred to throughout this thesis, unless stated otherwise.

1.3. Historical context

Lee was active as a dramatist at a time of great social and political change. Charles II, who had strong Catholic sympathies, advocated religious tolerance. However, this was opposed by Parliament, which was increasingly uneasy about the King's friendly stance towards Catholic France. Anti-Catholic feeling increased until Parliament forced Charles to accept the Test Act of 1673, which required holders of royal or government office to declare that they were not Catholic. Charles's brother, James, Duke of York, heir to the English throne, resigned his offices in order to avoid taking the oath, thus confirming his Catholicism. A

faction led by the Earl of Shaftesbury called for James to be removed from the line of succession. Some within this faction supported the rival claim to the throne of Charles's illegitimate Protestant son, the Duke of Monmouth. In 1678, allegations of a 'Popish Plot' to assassinate Charles and put James on the throne caused widespread panic. The period 1679 – 1681 saw the emergence of party politics in England. The Tories supported James's right to succeed his brother, while also supporting a strong Anglican Church, whereas the Whigs sought to exclude James from the succession while advocating greater tolerance for Protestant dissenters. Charles prorogued Parliament repeatedly between 1679 and 1681 in an attempt to prevent calls for James's exclusion. Since the City of London was strongly in favour of exclusion, in March 1681 Charles called Parliament in staunchly royalist Oxford. However, the Whigs rejected his offer to limit the powers of any future Catholic king, giving Charles the excuse to dissolve Parliament once more. Parliament was not called again during his reign; henceforth Charles effectively ruled as an absolute monarch in the mould of Louis XIV of France. Whigs were removed from positions of power and the Tories took control. James became King in 1685, Charles having converted to Catholicism on his deathbed. Monmouth was executed later that year after leading a rebellion against the new King. James restored power to Catholics, appointing them to key positions. The birth of his son in 1688 seemed to guarantee a Catholic succession, so a group of English noblemen requested the intervention of the Protestant Dutch Prince William of Orange, husband of James's daughter Mary. William's army invaded England in November 1688. James fled, Parliament declared his abdication, and in February 1689 William and Mary were crowned joint monarchs. The Protestant succession was secured.

The three plays examined in this thesis bookend this period of considerable religious, social and political upheaval. Lee wrote *The Massacre of Paris* c.1679. The play was banned until 1689; a previously contentious anti-Catholic work became welcome under strongly Protestant rule. In the interim, Lee reused material from the play in new works. The bawdy satire *The Princess of Cleve* was written and staged c.1680, without much acclaim. Lee's collaboration with Dryden, *The Duke of Guise*, set out overtly to draw parallels between England during the Exclusion Crisis and events of both the French Wars of Religion and the English Civil War. Unsurprisingly, the play proved controversial. Its performance was delayed for several months by a ban which was lifted once Charles had re-established control of London and routed Shaftesbury's faction. Having been staged in December 1682, the play was printed the following year, with a statement from Dryden announcing his intention to defend the work from its Whiggish critics. *The Vindication: Or the Parallel of the French Holy-League, and the English League and Covenant, Turn'd into a Seditious Libell against the King and his Royal Highness, by Thomas Hunt and the Authors of the Reflections upon the Pretended Parallel in the Play called The Duke of Guise* (1683) followed, in which Dryden claimed, somewhat disingenuously, that the Whigs were reading more meaning into the play than was intended. Dryden refuted accusations that he had corrupted his co-author with Tory wiles: 'that I tempted my Friend to alter [his earlier play] is a notorious *Whiggism*, to save the *broader Word*' (Dryden, 1683, p.41).

Lee's response to the furore surrounding the play is not recorded. After his four-year incarceration in Bedlam, he published *The Princess of Cleve* in 1689, minus the scenes 'borrrowed' from *The Massacre of Paris*, and petitioned the Lord Chamberlain to lift the ban on the earlier play, now restored to its 'first Figure' (*Cleve*, dedicatory epistle, l.21). This was

granted and *The Massacre of Paris* was performed in November 1689 to great acclaim from its patriotically Protestant audience.

1.4 Literature review

Despite his popularity during his lifetime and the eighteenth century, Nathaniel Lee has received relatively little critical attention in recent years. This section reviews literature relevant to Lee's career in general and to *The Massacre of Paris*, *The Princess of Cleve* and *The Duke of Guise* specifically.

Published monographs focusing solely on Lee are scarce. Ham's joint biography of Lee and Thomas Otway (1931 [1969]) offers some biographical insight into Lee's political views and the impact of these upon his writing. Ham is one of the few critics to consider the pamphlet war which followed *The Duke of Guise*. However, his tendency to refer to Lee as 'Mad Nat' throughout the monograph demeans the playwright and reveals the extent to which this is a biased appraisal of Lee's work. Armistead's 1979 monograph argues that 'the mental pathology of political leadership and its relation to both social and supernatural phenomena' (p.175) is a recurring theme of Lee's plays. Armistead's thesis becomes somewhat forced when applied to atypical plays such as *The Princess of Cleve*, and the omission of Lee's two collaborations with Dryden prevents this being a comprehensive overview of his work.

One of the most influential, but unpublished, works on Lee is William van Lennep's 1933 doctoral thesis, 'The Life and Works of Nathaniel Lee: A Study of the Sources', which has informed much twentieth-century criticism of the plays. Van Lennep examines all thirteen plays closely, presenting an extensive survey of Lee's source material. However, Van Lennep

does not consider in depth the techniques Lee uses to adapts his sources; this is addressed in this thesis, focusing upon *The Massacre of Paris*, *The Princess of Cleve* and *The Duke of Guise*.

Unsurprisingly, given the turbulent period in which he was active as a dramatist, much criticism of Lee considers the political aspects of his work, often debating his party allegiance. *Lucius Junius Brutus* (1681) is regarded as his most strongly Whiggish play, verging on republican in its depiction of the expulsion from Rome of the Tarquin kings; the play was banned after only a few performances for 'Scandalous Expressions & Reflections upon ye Government' (Loftis, 1967, p.xii). Owen (1996, *passim*; 2002, pp.85-120) argues that Lee exhibited Whiggish traits throughout his career, as does Ham (1931 [1969], p.124), while Hayne (1996) and Hume (1976a, pp.121-123) assert that Lee converted to Toryism around 1681 – 1682. Brown (1986) examines Lee's plays from the Popish Plot to the Exclusion Crisis, and concludes that the dramatist was politically independent, claiming this 'is the most salient feature of his political dramas' (p.51), building on his previous argument (1985, p.22) that *The Duke of Guise* displays no apparent shift in ideology compared to *The Massacre of Paris*. Hume (1976a, p.122) asserts that the savage satire and 'moral flux' of *The Princess of Cleve* arises from 'the spiritual turmoil and unsettling self-questioning' Lee must have undergone through his conversion from Whig to Tory, an argument that stands only if one accepts Hume's assertion that Lee associated ardent Whiggism with the 'heroic value-system' (p.137) which the play mocks.

Of the three plays examined in this thesis, *The Duke of Guise* has received the most critical attention. Almost inevitably given the prominence of Lee's collaborator John Dryden,

criticism of the play focuses frequently on the Poet Laureate's Tory politics (Bachorik, 1973; Gardiner, 1981; Hinnant, 1968, 1973; King, 1965; Miller, 1979), sometimes so much so that Lee's contribution is overlooked entirely (Dammers, 1971; Smith, 1957). This bias has existed since the play's earliest, controversial, reception, as contemporary critics attacked Dryden in a series of pamphlets damming the play and accusing him of turning his unwitting dupe Lee from the noble path of Whiggism to the Tory dark side (Kewes, 1998, p.164). *The Duke of Guise* has been of interest to scholars primarily for its commentary on the Exclusion Crisis, with its fiercely Tory defence of the King and its implicit attack on the Duke of Monmouth, who is generally acknowledged to be represented by the title character (Stroup and Cooke, 1955 [1968], Vol.2, pp.390-391). Most criticism concentrates upon the play's political parallels. In their extensive analysis of *The Duke of Guise* and Dryden's subsequent *Vindication* of the play, Dearing and Roper (1993, p.511) assert that the 'importance and interest' of the work 'lie not in the play "as a Play" but as a politically referential drama that prompted a significant contemporary debate about the nature of its reference'. Brown (1985, p.20) argues that Lee's writing is restrained compared to that of his previous works because the political elements of the play are very much to the fore and Lee had to write in a less emotive style nearer to that of Dryden; he asserts that the play is not significantly Tory in outlook. Similarly, Streete (2017, p.203) argues that *The Duke of Guise* is a 'politically ambiguous, fluid text' reflecting the complexities of the Exclusion Crisis. This view of Lee's impartiality is contradicted by other critics, who see *The Duke of Guise* as evidence that Lee underwent a significant alteration in his political beliefs (see Hume, 1976a, p.137, and the pamphlets written in response to *The Duke of Guise*). Ham (1931 [1969], p.173), however, suggests that Lee was motivated not by political fervour but by the need to earn money after the failure of his two previous plays, an argument developed by Kewes (1998, p.174) in her

examination of the collaborations between the two dramatists. She observes that, in defending himself in *The Vindication* from accusations levelled by Whiggish pamphleteers, Dryden is at pains to minimise his contribution to the play, as Harth (1993, p.189) also notes, and to clear himself from charges of plagiarising *The Massacre of Paris*, which Lee cannibalised extensively for the later work (Kewes, 1998, pp.165-168). Criticism of *The Duke of Guise* has largely overlooked the patchwork nature of the play, tending to view it as a coherent whole written with strongly Tory intentions. However, as Chapter 3 will discuss, the play is an awkward hybrid which splices together Dryden's satirical propaganda with Lee's more complex contribution, which consists of passages recycled from *The Massacre of Paris* and new scenes based on Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France*.

The Massacre of Paris has often been examined primarily for its role as one of the main sources for *The Duke of Guise*. Brown (1985, p.22) examines its political parallels and finds the play 'clearly anti-Catholic, but not so clearly anti-monarchist'. Canfield (1985, p.247) argues that *The Massacre of Paris* demonstrates royalism by acting as a warning to a weak monarch and is not necessarily anti-monarchist, exploring the play's depictions of faith and betrayal and the treatment of these themes in *The Duke of Guise* (pp.247-250). However, the overt political parallels in *The Duke of Guise* have tended to skew criticism of *The Massacre of Paris*, causing contemporary political meaning to be read into all aspects of the play and overlooking its qualities as a drama in its own right. As Chapter 2 will explore, *The Massacre of Paris* showcases Lee's highly emotive dramatic style. This has been the focus of criticism of the play which rebuts the common misconception of Lee as an undisciplined, bombastic writer. Schille (1988) views *The Massacre of Paris* as a pathetic tragedy, asserting that Lee's use of 'violent emotion' and elaborate language are 'closely tied to the psychological

atmosphere he wants to create' (p.36). However, in considering only the text itself without 'tracing the cultural or historical circumstances' that influenced Lee (p.34), Schille misses the play's political subtext and so diminishes her own examination of its meaning. Hermanson (2014) includes *The Massacre of Paris* in her exploration of Lee's 'horror plays' of the 1670s, examining the relationship between the scheming Queen Mother and her sons (pp.72-77), and noting how the rant and hyperbole of Lee's speeches act as a counterpart to visual spectacle (p.104). The latter point is developed extensively by Slaney (2013) in her study of the influence of Seneca on Restoration drama, which also notes the importance of staging in Lee's plays in meeting the audience's appetite for sensation. Slaney suggests that, rather than being the hack purveyor of rant and bombast that his detractors have described, Lee understood the power of language to move an audience, crafting his plays 'to stimulate sensory overload' (p.69) in order to evoke powerful emotional responses. Slaney views *The Massacre of Paris* as an example of Senecan 'hypertragedy', in which 'characters with no control over the emotions that possess them' express themselves in 'non-mimetic dramatic language' to represent 'universal catastrophe' on a human scale (p.53). Brown (1983, pp.396-397) highlights an example of this, arguing that Lee 'arrange[s] a powerful emotional effect' on the audience through the character of Marguerite and her passionate interactions with other key characters. Chapter 2 will consider in detail the ways in which Lee influences the emotional response of the audience in *The Massacre of Paris*, using an inherently contradictory approach to his source material to craft a tragedy which reflects contemporary social and political concerns.

A striking departure from Lee's usual style, *The Princess of Cleve* holds 'near-canonical status' (Corman, 2001, p.190) as an example of a 'dark social comed[y]' which failed to find

contemporary success but rewards closer examination. Lee transforms Lafayette's courtly tale of noble star-crossed lovers into a bawdy sex comedy which fuses the aristocratic love story of the novel with a smuttily comic cuckolding plot. The play's critical reception reveals perhaps as much about the critics themselves as the text. As Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, pp.149-150) and Hume (1976a, pp.117-118) discuss, many recoil in scandalised horror, condemning this 'rotting dung-hill' (Nicoll, 1952, p.147). Hume overcomes his revulsion at this 'joylessly obscene' 'rancid smut' (1976a, pp.132-133) to analyse the play's function as a satirical attack on the libertine ethos and a debunking of the conventions of the heroic play, a reading endorsed by Brown (1983, pp.397-400) and Weber (1986, pp.69-78). This argument contrasts strikingly with Stroup's assertion that *The Princess of Cleve* is an early example of sentimental comedy (1935). This analysis virtually ignores the entire cuckolding subplot and maintains that the rake Nemours is ultimately 'good at heart' (p.202) because of his apparent redemption in the play's closing lines, a neat resolution which most other critics interpret as an attack on the alleged deathbed conversion of the recently deceased Earl of Rochester (Armistead, 1979, pp.156-157; Cordner, 1995, p.xxiii; Hume, 1976a, pp.129; Weber, 1986, pp.77-78). Weber (1986) notes that Lee's play differs from most other Restoration comedies by 'actually showing Nemours's appetite in action' (p.70) and examines Lee's use of language in conveying Nemours's sexuality. Knutson (1988) examines *The Princess of Cleve* as an adaptation of Lafayette's novel, but considers it primarily as an onstage representation of that work rather than as a satire on the English court, expressing disappointment that the play conveys 'no real sense of mid-sixteenth century France' (p.169). Like Stroup (1935), Knutson takes Nemours's final reformation at face value, while noting that both novel and play expose 'the same egotistical carnal pursuits' in the Valois court (pp.170-171). Collington and Collington (2002) endorse this latter point as they compare Lee's play with

Lafayette's novel. They argue that, rather than 'deliberately distort[ing]' his source in a fit of pique after the banning of *The Massacre of Paris* (p.201), Lee instead makes explicit Lafayette's implicit criticism of the licentiousness and sexual hypocrisy of royal courts (p.197). However, although Collington and Collington refer to the impact that translation may have had on the meaning of the text (p.197), in their analysis they consider only the original French text of the novel; at no point do they acknowledge that an English translation was published in 1678, or examine the possibility that it was this translation that was Lee's source. Little critical consideration has been given to Lee's reuse of material from *The Massacre of Paris* in *The Princess of Cleve*. Although Van Lennep (1933, pp.392-398) and Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.151) identify scenes in the printed text which may have been edited to remove recycled speeches, no attempt has been made to reconstruct the original performance text or to investigate the wider influence of the earlier work upon the play as a whole. This will be addressed in Chapter 4.

Lee's work has undergone renewed critical interest in recent years. Slaney (2013, p.54) observes the comparative dearth of research into Lee's work and his sources. Hermanson's inclusion of Lee in her study of Restoration horror plays, Chua's examination of *Lucius Junius Brutus* in his consideration of heroic dramas as a response to regicide and revolution, Danby's investigation of the 'Performance of Passionate Pain' in Lee's early plays, all published in 2014, and Streete's 2017 exploration of the engagement of *The Duke of Guise* with contemporary political and social issues suggest that Lee, if not yet fully embraced by the canon, is assuming new relevance to modern scholars. A singular writer of unconventional plays, Lee merits a thorough reappraisal to which this thesis will contribute.

2. *THE MASSACRE OF PARIS*

2.1 Introduction

The Massacre of Paris (c.1679) has, perhaps, the most unusual history of any Restoration tragedy. Banned for a decade, its text was cannibalised to create two further plays before Lee was able to persuade the Lord Chamberlain to permit its performance. In 1689, having been restored to its original form, the play was performed for royalty and proved a great success. However, it soon fell into obscurity and *The Massacre of Paris* has received little critical attention to date. To address this lacuna, this chapter presents an in-depth study of the play. Criticism of *The Massacre of Paris* often categorises it as strident anti-Catholic propaganda, yet Lee returns repeatedly to the play to create new works without religious themes. This suggests that the play has other qualities which have been overlooked by previous scholarship. Therefore, through close analysis of the text, this chapter will reassess *The Massacre of Paris* by examining Lee's portrayal of Catholics and Protestants in the play and how Lee adapts Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France* (1678) to create the work. Section 2.2 will identify textual evidence in *The Massacre of Paris* which supports a strongly anti-Catholic reading of the play. This will be challenged in Section 2.3 by an exploration into the ways in which Lee seems to undermine subtly his own apparently pro-Protestant stance to present an ultimately contradictory work which refuses to endorse any religion above all others. Section 2.4 will demonstrate that the complexity of the play arises from Lee's inventive approach to adapting Davila's *History*, combining a meticulously accurate depiction of historical events with partially fictional characterisation. Section 2.5 will show that Lee's close reliance upon Davila's *History* also contributes to the play's stylistic

resemblance to Early Modern revenge tragedy. The chapter will conclude its re-evaluation of *The Massacre of Paris* with a discussion of its findings in Section 2.6.

The Massacre of Paris is Nathaniel Lee's most factual drama. Like Christopher Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris* (c.1592), which Lee does not use as a source, the play dramatizes the slaughter of French Protestant Huguenots on St Bartholomew's Day, 24 August, 1572, a sectarian atrocity carried out on the orders of the Catholic King Charles IX. The King and the Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici, arranged the marriage of the King's sister, Marguerite de Valois, to the Huguenot King of Navarre, ostensibly to unite Catholic and Protestant factions. However, the wedding was a pretext devised by the Queen Mother and the Catholic House of Guise to lure leading Huguenots to Paris in order to assassinate the Huguenot leader, Gaspard de Coligny, Admiral of France. The initial assassination attempt failed. Persuaded by the Queen Mother, Charles IX gave orders for the murder of the Huguenot leaders. Thousands of Protestants, including de Coligny, died in the ensuing violence. Charles claimed to have acted in self-defence against a non-existent plot against his life. Lee's play focuses on the machinations of Catholic plotters and the Admiral's inexorable trajectory towards disaster.

In general, *The Massacre of Paris* is considered part of the discourse surrounding the Popish Plot of 1678/9 (Armistead, 1979, pp.95-98; Brown, 1985, pp.22-23; Hume, 1976a, pp.120-122; Hume, 1976b [1990], p.401; Stroup and Cooke, 1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.3; Van Lennep, 1933, pp.264-270). However, Hume (1976a, pp.120-122) argues that it was written in 1681 as an expression of Protestant loyalty to Charles II, an opinion endorsed by Brown (1983, p.388). In the dedication to *Caesar Borgia* (1680), Lee complains of being 'harshly handl'd' (ll.15-16) at a time '[w]hen an Universal Consternation spreads through the Kingdom' (l.1).

This is clearly a reference to the Popish Plot: thus it is probable that the ill treatment which Lee claims almost ended his career ('my courage quite fail'd me', l.16) is indeed the banning of his previous play, *The Massacre of Paris*. Hence the earlier date of 1679 seems more likely than 1681. At that time, England was filled with suspicion, fear and paranoia (Kenyon, 1974 [2000]). In this febrile atmosphere, anti-Catholic literature found a ready market.

With its scheming Catholic antagonists and its story of the almost Christlike martyrdom of a Protestant military hero, Lee's play should have been a box office smash hit. However, *The Massacre of Paris* was banned before it could be performed. It did not reach the stage until 1689, when Lee succeeded in persuading the Earl of Dorset, then Lord Chamberlain, to lift the ban on it. The United Company performed the play before Mary II and her maids of honour on 7 November 1689 (Van Lennep, 1933, p.269). The emotional impact of the play upon the audience was considerable (Ham, 1931 [1969], p.167; Stroup and Cooke, 1955 [1968], Vol.2, pp.3, 571; Van Lennep, 1933, p.269), as a contemporary reference reveals: 'There were more weeping eyes in the Church, than there were at the first acting of Mr. Lee's Protestant Play, *The Massacre of Paris*' (Brown, 1690, p.28).

The Massacre of Paris was printed in 1690. It is not known to what extent Lee revised the text for publication, although, as will be discussed below, Van Lennep (1933, p.309) identifies one scene in it that is likely to have been cut from the 1679 version after material was recycled by Lee in his next play, *Caesar Borgia* (1680). *The Massacre of Paris* was revived subsequently in 1716 and 1745; Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.3) consider it to have been 'the stock offering of the London stage' at times of Jacobite rebellion. No subsequent productions have been recorded, however. The play's bloody denouement has

been considered the reason for this unpopularity, with critics from the eighteenth century onwards finding the graphic violence an affront to audiences' sensibilities (Stroup and Cooke, 1955 [1968], Vol. 2, pp.3-5). Some critics have regarded the play as a strongly partisan work, verging on Whiggish propaganda (Owen, 1996, pp.243-249; Owen, 2001, p.136). Hughes (1996, p.358) dismisses it as an 'anti-Catholic pot-boiler' and Hume (1976b [1990]) labels it 'Popish Plot agit-prop'. However, Lee's play is more complex and nuanced than these interpretations might suggest.

2.2 Anti-Catholicism in *The Massacre of Paris*

While it is overly simplistic to view *The Massacre of Paris* as propaganda, most critics (Barbour, 1940, p.113; Brown, 1983, p.388; Brown, 1985, p.19; Canfield, 1985, p.247; Hermanson, 2014, p.84; Hughes, 1996, p.269; Kewes, 2001, p.372; Slaney, 2013, pp.52-53) agree that it is a fiercely Protestant play. This section considers the evidence for this reading by exploring the extent of the play's anti-Catholic bias and examining the ways in which Lee pits Catholic characters against Protestants to influence the emotions of an audience.

There is no doubt that Lee demonstrates anti-Catholic bias in choosing to dramatize the infamous St Bartholomew's Day Massacre of French Protestant Huguenots at the height of the Popish Plot paranoia in 1679. In the hysterical atmosphere that ensued at that time (Kenyon, 1972 [2000]), a number of scaremongering anti-Catholic pamphlets and broadsides were printed (Van Lennep, 1933, pp.265-266), stoking fears of violence and bloodshed. In Gilbert Burnet's *A Relation of the Barbarous and Bloody Massacre* (1678), the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre was presented to contemporary London as an example of murderous Catholic duplicity and a dire warning of the looming threat facing England. A

detailed account of the massacre also featured in the 1678 reprinting of Cotterell and Aylesbury's 1647 translation of Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France* (*Historia Delle Guerre Di Francia*, 1630). As discussed below, William Van Lennep (1933, pp.271-318) has shown that this text served as Lee's main source for *The Massacre of Paris*. The prevalence of anti-Catholic works at that time suggests that, regardless of his own views on religion, Lee may have been demonstrating potentially good business sense in choosing this subject. A play which spoke so directly to contemporary concerns would have had the potential to draw packed audiences over several days, proving lucrative to the playwright. In 1679, it paid to appear anti-Catholic.

Accordingly, Catholic characters in *The Massacre of Paris* are presented as iniquitous, vice-ridden continentals of the kind to appal any right-thinking Restoration audience. The play opens with the Duke of Guise hauled from the bed of his obsessively passionate mistress by his uncle, the Cardinal of Lorrain:

GUISE: Just from your Arms, by this great Guardian rais'd,
Call'd to the Council of a wary King,
On whom depends the Fortune of Lorrain,
O, Marguerite, yet to drag at this,
After such full possession thus to languish:
If this be not to love thee, say what is!
(*Massacre*, I.i.1-6)

Lee establishes Guise's character economically in these opening lines: an ambitious, oversexed libertine with a tricky mistress and an uneasy relationship with his monarch. Marguerite, meanwhile, makes her entrance as a manipulative borderline hysteric prone to melodramatic outbursts:

MARGUERITE: Hear, hear him, O you Powers, because I love him
Above my Life, beyond all joys on Earth,
He says I am his Ruine.
(*Massacre*, I.i.11-13)

Marguerite has the measure of her ‘dear, Ambitious Guise’ (*Massacre*, I.i.18), yet she is compelled by love – or lust – to lose all self-control, ‘plung’d in this dishonour, / Like a fall’n Angel roll’d through all my Hells’ (*Massacre*, I.i.21-22). The biblical imagery evoking the Book of Revelations emphasises the sin of her sexual activity out of wedlock. Marguerite is strident in declaring her passion in terms that continually evoke the fires of hell: ‘I’m all a Brand’ (*Massacre*, I.i.45); ‘this Fever of my furious passion / Burns me to Madness’ (*Massacre*, I.i.47-48); ‘pity me, for oh, I burn, I burn’ (*Massacre*, I.i.62). The Cardinal’s shocked reaction to her crazed demeanour neatly foreshadows the revenge plot which drives the narrative: ‘she gazes on you, / As you would do on him that kill’d your Father’ (*Massacre*, I.i.64-65). Yet the Cardinal is appalled not by the unnerving intensity of the relationship but by the prospect that the sexually enraptured Guise (‘Go tell the King and Council I am sick; / For I’le to Bed again’ [*Massacre*, I.i.34-35]) may, like ‘the Partner of the Roman Empire, / Drooping Antonius’ (*Massacre*, I.i.90-91), throw away greatness for a woman. The Cardinal deplores Guise’s betrothal to Marguerite. In his view, women exist only for male sexual gratification and the bond of marriage is abhorrent: ‘I had rather you should Whore a thousand Women, / Than love but one, tho’ in a lawful way’ (*Massacre*, I.i.87-88). This association of worldliness and hypocrisy with Catholic churchmen is reinforced by Guise’s apparently bizarre metaphor for the effect of Marguerite’s sexual allure:

GUISE: … the beauties of her Breasts,
Which with a White, more pure than new-fall’n Snow,
Would sure have tempted Hermits from their Orgies,
To nod and smile a little at the wonder.
(*Massacre*, I.i.81-84)

Critics have noted Lee’s occasional and regrettable tendency to lapse into unintentional comedy (Hayne, 1996, p.348; Slaney, 2013, p.67). It is possible that the allusion to ‘hermits’ orgies’ here is one example. Alternatively, it could be a now obscure topical reference (Stern,

2019), rather than a startling misconception of the social habits of recluses. However, the social and political context of the play suggests that the 'Hermits' are monks, and hence this is intended as a throwaway gibe about Catholic licentiousness. Lee uses the term in the same derogatory sense in the epilogue to his next play, *Caesar Borgia* (1680): 'But Dominicks, Franciscans, Hermits, Fryars, / Shall breed no more a Race of zealous Lyars' (ll.23-24). In the seventeenth century, the term was 'used in the designation of certain monastic orders' or to describe those who prayed for the souls of others (OED, 2020). The word was used in this sense by Shakespeare ('As perfect / As begging Hermits in their holy prayers', *Titus Andronicus*, III.ii.40-41), who Lee sought openly to emulate (*Mithridates*, 1678, dedicatory epistle, ll.53-54). All this would support an anti-Catholic reading of Lee's reference to 'Hermits' engaging in 'Orgies'. Thus for the first ninety lines of the play Lee titillates the audience with thrillingly shameless popish fornication before introducing the plot against the Huguenots, 'that Mighty Engin / Which now begins to move so dreadfully' (*Massacre*, I.i.109-110). Anti-Catholicism has been used here as a device to draw the audience into emotional involvement with the play by encouraging its antipathy.

Damningly, Lee portrays Catholic leaders who lack genuine belief in God and Heaven and who use religion as a lever to obtain power. The eloquent Queen Mother raises hypocritical cant to an art form. Cynically and ruthlessly, she uses a deeply religious register to transform the Huguenot Admiral of France's devout faith into a tightening noose:

QUEEN MOTHER: Ah, my Lord Admiral, can you imagine
That we are past all fear, or hope of Mercy,
That there's no Conscience, no regard of Vows,
No Grace, no Reverence, fear of Heav'n, nor Hell,
Nor common Care of Fame, ev'n in this World?
(*Massacre*, V.ii.90-94)

Catholic contempt for true religious conviction is demonstrated further by the ease with which the Queen Mother, supported by the Cardinal of Lorrain, ‘this perjur’d jugling man of God’ (*Massacre*, II.i.173), manipulates the King, assuring him that their actions are sanctioned by God:

QUEEN MOTHER: So far from Sin,
Or ought that’s damnable, is our Design;
That my Lord Cardinal will tell you, Sir,
’Tis meritorious: and when e’re we strike,
The Church shall bless it, as a blow from Heav’n.
(*Massacre*, V.i.40-44).

Despite his fear of God’s wrath (‘I must not let the Massacre go forward: / I’m warn’d from Heav’n’, *Massacre*, V.i.38-39), which contemporary audiences would have recognised as well-founded, ultimately the King is more afraid of his mother than of Heaven. He pleads with her to keep him in thrall:

KING: If you would have me fixt, you must not leave me,
You must talk out to my distracted Soul,
Lest Conscience drown the Voice of Policy.
(*Massacre*, V.i.87-89)

After the massacre he sanctioned is carried out, his fear of God returns but it is too late. He is damned by his wilful rejection of his own conscience: ‘The Angel’s words are true, / And Charles is near his end’ (*Massacre*, V.v.19-20). As Canfield (1985, p.248) observes, ‘[n]ot even kings are exempt’ from divine retribution. Brown (1985, p.22) argues that, as the King ‘does not originate the massacre plot and at last pronounces a divinely inspired judgement against it’, he ‘end[s] the play as the one remaining sympathetic figure’. However, as Schille (1988, p.38) notes, ‘the King’s last speech is… panicky’ and does not restore ‘moral order’. It is difficult to find sympathy for a weak king who actively seeks persuasion to follow a course he knows is morally abhorrent, even after receiving a warning from Heaven. Unlike Protestantism, in which people communicate directly with God, Catholicism requires a priest

to act as an intermediary. Lee implies that this corrupts religion obscenely as the Cardinal instructs the King how to think in order to ensure that the slaughter goes ahead:

CARDINAL: Therefore, my Lord, I wish you to suspect
Whatever thwarts you in your holy purpose;
However veil'd, tho' in an Angel's form,
Conclude it the suggestion of the Devil.
(*Massacre*, V.i.45-48)

The Queen Mother immediately declares the subject closed, 'So; now, I hope, these Qualms are at an end, / And we may now close pursue the main intention' (*Massacre*, V.i.49-50). Significantly, the King does not speak for another twenty-three lines; during his silence, the Queen Mother, the Cardinal and the King's younger brother, the Duke of Anjou, briskly settle the plans for the massacre. A king embodies the power of his nation, yet here Catholicism has usurped that power for evil ends. Hence through his portrayal of a Machiavellian French court controlling its King through the perversion of religion, Lee reflects contemporary fears of the possible consequences of a return to a Catholic monarchy.

The iniquities of Catholicism are highlighted still further by their stark contrast with the virtues personified by Lee's Protestant characters. The Admiral of France is both brave and loyal, willing to risk his personal safety in the service of the Protestant Queen of Navarre: 'Since you are thus resolv'd [to visit Paris], I'le go the foremost' (*Massacre*, II.i.105). His military prowess in the Huguenot cause is indisputable: 'I met the elder Rhinegrave hand to hand, / Shot him i'th'Face, and left him on the ground' (*Massacre*, II.i.58-59). In contrast to the King's wavering faith, the piety of the Admiral is without question. His total belief in 'Calvin's kindled Doctrine' (*Massacre*, II.i.36) drives him to fight Catholicism, 'that Religion that would Rend the World' (*Massacre*, II.i.50). Through the Admiral, Lee recalls past atrocities, alluding to the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 to reinforce the idea that Catholicism

'sticks not at the slaughter of whole States, / Blowing up Senates, nor at murdering Kings' (*Massacre*, II.i.51-52). Such a couplet is undoubtedly intended to reflect the Popish Plot fears of contemporary Protestant audiences, aligning them emotionally with the Admiral and his cause. The Admiral and his wife, Antramont, are presented as models of moral, upright Protestantism, the antithesis of the depraved Catholicism Lee portrays in the play's opening scene. In sharp contrast to Guise's scandalous, tempestuous lust affair with Marguerite, their marriage eschews extravagant declarations of love. Whereas Guise makes wild claims,

GUISE: … O be Witnesses
My Brain and Soul, there's not an Artery
That runs through all the Body of thy Guise,
But beats where e're it pass Marguerite.
(*Massacre*, I.i.29-32)

the love between the Admiral and Antramont is solid and real, given physical form in their children, represented onstage by references to Antramont's pregnancy: 'Your Wife, this poor Innocent unborn, / With all your other Orphans, are undone' (*Massacre*, II.i.215-216). The couple speak in a noble, heroic register, echoing each other's diction to demonstrate their strong unity: 'Leave me not Gaspar, to a flood of Tears… / Beg me not, Martia; 'tis impossible' (*Massacre*, II.i.196, 198). Their speeches are elevated by classical allusions throughout their scenes together, which give 'Roman virtue' to this 'exemplary Protestant couple' (Owen, 1996, p.245). The intelligent and shrewd Antramont is aware that going to Paris may well be suicide:

ANTRAMONT: … you turn the Sword
Upon your self, which Charles and that false Queen
Brandish against you, going thus to Court.
(*Massacre*, II.i.185-187)

Yet, despite this, the Admiral is such a model of Protestant heroism that Antramont will lay down her life in his cause: 'I'll follow you to Court: I will, my Lord; / And since you'l have it so, we'll burn together' (*Massacre*, II.i.238-239). Thus, through the characters of the Admiral

of France and Antramont, Lee presents the Protestant faith as the source of all virtue. Its followers are true Christian believers willing to sacrifice their lives for God. Catholicism, already portrayed by Lee in an overwhelmingly negative light, is shamed utterly by comparison.

Lee harnesses the empathy of the audience to the play's anti-Catholic message by portraying his admirable Protestant role models in hazardous situations which evoke strong emotional responses. Brown (1983, p.396) observes that the Admiral's 'spiritual nobility' and strong sense of honour prevent him believing that the King and Queen Mother 'can be such bold faced liars'. This dilemma has religious implications. The Admiral is well aware that it is possible 'That all this trust is deep dissimulation' (*Massacre*, IV.ii.46). However, that would mean 'That there's no Faith nor Credit to be given / To the inviolable Royal Word' (*Massacre*, IV.ii.47-48). The King rules by divine right; he is God's representative on Earth. His word *must* be true or the natural order of the universe is inverted cataclysmically. Yet if the King *is* lying to entrap the Admiral then it must be 'the Will of Heav'n' (*Massacre*, IV.ii.45), so the Admiral, as a devout Protestant, must submit. Thus, over the course of the play, the Admiral moves inexorably from justified wariness to ardent desire for martyrdom:

ADMIRAL: Upon my knees I beg the Power Divine
T'establish thus the Protestant Religion,
To plant it in the Blood of lost Coligni,
If that, Alas, may satisfy their Fury.
(*Massacre*, V.ii.10-13)

A contemporary audience, then, is put in an impossible position. As good Protestants, its members should welcome the Admiral's glorious sacrifice, which will bring a heavenly reward. But, having been encouraged to become the Admiral's disciples by Lee's heroic

characterisation of de Coligny, they experience mounting tension and suspense as the threat to the Admiral's life increases as the play nears its violent conclusion.

The Admiral's final scene (*Massacre*, V.iv) is one of considerable emotional power. He enters '*in his Night-Gown*' (*Massacre*, s.d., V.iv.1), immediately after '*The President Marches his Men over the Stage'*, his solitude and *déshabillé* emphasising his vulnerability and unreadiness at the time of greatest danger. The Admiral's final realisation of his betrayal at the hands of his ruler merges legal and holy registers to convey the enormity of Catholic perfidy, a crime not just against the laws of man, but the laws of God:

ADMIRAL: The King has giv'n his Warrant for my last;
His Vows, his Oaths, and Altar-Obligations
Are lost: the Wax of all those Sacred Bonds
Runs at the Queens Revenge, the Fire that melts 'em.
(*Massacre*, V.iv.3-6)

The Admiral slips into the third person to identify himself explicitly with his faith: 'They [the 'Sacred Bonds'] are no more; the Admiral's no more' (*Massacre*, V.iv.7). This Christlike merging of man and supernatural force reaches its peak in the Admiral's next speech. In response to his '*bleeding*' (*Massacre*, s.d., V.iv.8) follower Cavagnes's despairing tally of the Huguenot dead (*Massacre*, V.iv.8-15), the Admiral delivers a rousing, defiant and visionary speech embracing martyrdom and prophesying the unstoppable growth and triumph of the Protestant Church:

ADMIRAL: Why, let 'em, let 'em come;
We shall e're long, my Friend, be worth their Envy:
To dye thus for Religion, O Cavagnes,
It puts the Soul in everlasting Tune,
And sounds already in the Ears of Angels!
And, O, what cause had ever such Foundation!
I tell thee that the Root shall reach the Center,
Spread to the Poles, and with her top touch Heav'n.
(Massacre, V.iv.15-22)

As Armistead (1979, p.103) notes, earlier in the play Antramont identifies her husband as 'the Vine that spreads his Arms to Heav'n' (*Massacre*, II.218), foreshadowing the imagery used here. Hence, in this climactic scene, Lee imbues the Admiral with divinity, appearing as both God and man. At this moment of supreme spiritual elevation, the Admiral's faith empowers him to defy his murderers:

ADMIRAL: But see, they come: stand fixt, and look on Death
With such Contempt, so Masterly an Eye,
As if he were thy Slave.
(Massacre, V.iv.23-25)

Only through the Protestant faith, then, Lee asserts here, can Death be defeated. Through the awed remorse of the men sent to murder him ('Kill him your self, for my part I'le not touch him. / Nor I: for my part I am sorry for what is done already', *Massacre*, V.iv.27-28), Lee makes it appear, albeit briefly, as though the Admiral's faith might save him. Yet death is inevitable and the Admiral, Christlike to the end, embraces it while absolving his killers from responsibility: 'I command thee, do as thou art order'd, / Thou'lt cut but little from the Line of Life' (*Massacre*, V.iv.34-35). Thus, through his portrayal of the Admiral's acceptance of death, Lee presents Protestantism as the noble, transcendent, true faith, the complete antithesis of cruel, immoral, and hypocritical Catholicism. However, the Admiral's final words are calculated to move a Protestant audience beyond Christian meekness to impassioned, Old Testament condemnation of this Catholic atrocity (Stern, 2020):

ADMIRAL: And, O revenge, revenge thy Peoples blood.
A hundred thousand Souls for Justice call;
Let not the guiltless without Vengeance fall. [*Dyes.*
(*Massacre*, V.iv.50-52)

Channelling Jacobean dramatists such as Webster and Kyd, Lee calls explicitly for 'revenge' and 'Vengeance' at this moment of great emotional intensity, whipping up anti-Catholic feeling to the point of inciting violence.

Thus with its sensational and emotive depiction of villainous papists persecuting virtuous Protestants, *The Massacre of Paris* can be read undoubtedly as anti-Catholic propaganda. Lee articulates contemporary fears of a Popish Plot through his portrayal of Machiavellian Catholics manipulating a puppet king to imperil the lives of righteous Protestant subjects. The play reflects the prevailing public mood of English Protestants in 1679. Its later success after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 suggests that Lee judged audience tastes astutely in crafting a play which tapped into deeply-felt concerns about the future of both the English monarchy and the national religion.

2.3 Criticism of zealous Protestantism in *The Massacre of Paris*

As shown in the previous section, *The Massacre of Paris* appears to be populist Popish Plot propaganda which uses spectacle to rally Protestants against Catholics. However, as this section will demonstrate, Lee undermines this message throughout the play, criticising blinkered Protestantism through his complex characterisation of the Admiral of France. Lee also draws on ideas of Renaissance humanism to shape a play which attempts to meet the contemporary appetite for patriotic Protestantism while subtly advocating religious moderation and the avoidance of bloodshed and extremism of any kind.

Lee's celebration of the Protestant virtues of the Huguenot leader has been discussed above. However, throughout the play, Lee's portrayal of the Admiral is not one of wholehearted approval. de Coligny is prone to self-aggrandising speeches, spinning previous military disasters as divinely sanctioned triumphs to cast himself as a phenomenon:

ADMIRAL: I fought my self the Protestant Cause alone,
…
Then seeing all our Army quite defeated,
My Jaw-bone shatter'd, and my Voice quite spent,
I fled, with hopes to rise more terrible;
As it succeeded, to the astonishment
Of all the Christian World.
(*Massacre*, II.i.57-65)

Lee mocks the arrogant rhetoric slyly, as the Admiral's loyal followers fail to corroborate his version of events:

ADMIRAL: And, though we lost the Fight at Moncontour,
Yet speak, Cavagnes, did I fail in ought?
CAVAGNES: I was not there.
(*Massacre*, II.i.55-56)

The wisdom of the Admiral's staunch Calvinist belief in Providence is questioned throughout the play. Repeatedly, fellow Huguenots offer the Admiral prudent counsel which he rejects, instead preferring to put his faith in the 'Will of Heav'n' (*Massacre*, IV.ii.45):

ANTRAMONT: … why burst you not away?
There are at least ten thousand, your Adherents,
Will clear your passage to Chastillon:
…
ADMIRAL: Once more I say, my Fate is in the King.
(*Massacre*, V.ii.32-36)

As Armistead (1979, p.104) notes, this leads him to become 'passively idealistic' when urgent action is most necessary. When the Admiral confronts the likelihood of his own death, he does so in hyperbolic, self-glorifying terms:

ADMIRAL: I am contented for the Protestant Faith
Here to be hewn into a thousand pieces,
And made the Martyr of so good a Cause.
(*Massacre*, IV.ii.51-53)

The Admiral's refusal either to fight or to flee dooms his followers as well as himself ('Call the Chief Hugonots down, and cut their Throats', *Massacre*, V.iii.33). de Coligny's fanaticism and hubris have been as disastrous for the Huguenot faith as the machinations of

the Queen Mother. He has proved as easy to manipulate as the weak Catholic king. Hence Lee implies that immoderate Protestantism is foolish at best and, at worst, may prove as dangerous as Catholic skulduggery.

Even at its emotive climax, the play falls short of serving as one-dimensional Protestant propaganda as Lee undermines de Coligny's presumption of near-divinity. Mortally wounded, the Admiral's unshakeable faith sustains him impressively to the end:

ADMIRAL: … let's crawl
With all our Wounds into each others Arms,
And hand in hand go Martyr'd thus to Heaven.
(*Massacre*, V.iv.39-41).

However, Lee undercuts this image of religious glory with bathos. The Admiral's companion Cavanges is literally deaf to the possibility of salvation: 'I know not what you say; the stroak of Death / Has stun'd my sense of Hearing' (*Massacre*, V.iv.38-39). The Admiral has set himself up as the Huguenot messiah ('Was it not I that form'd 'em to a Body?', *Massacre*, II.i.38), but, unlike Christ, no one is saved by his death. Guise takes vindictive delight in wiping out the Admiral's entire family ('kill, as if 'twere Sport to see 'em bleed', *Massacre*, VI.ii.62) and obliterating any trace of his existence:

GUISE: See all his Bastards strangled on the spot;
There's Orders for't. The Hostel de Chastillon
Be raz'd for ever: his Posterity
Be made incapable of bearing Office,
Or being Noble; burn his Statue, haste.
(*Massacre*, IV.ii.56-60)

The fatal consequences of the Admiral's hubris stand as a warning against Protestant complacency. Heavenly glory, Lee avers, is bestowed only by the grace of God, not appropriated by man.

In the final act, Lee orchestrates a visceral revulsion against Catholic cruelty as the unarmed and defenceless Huguenot '*Commanders standing with their hands ty'd behind 'em*' (*Massacre*, s.d., V.v.3) are shot dead in cold blood by a firing squad on the orders of the Queen Mother. Before the reverberations of the shots have died away, the audience is bludgeoned still further by the dreadful sudden appearance of the Admiral's flaming corpse: '*The Scene draws, and shews the Admiral's Body burning*' (*Massacre*, s.d., V.v.4). Guise narrates the desecration of the body in horrifying detail:

GUISE: I saw the Master Villain dragg'd along
To Execution, by the Common People,
Who from the Shoulders tore the mangled Head,
Cut off his Hands, and at Mountfaucon hung him,
Half burning, by one Leg upon the Gallows.
(*Massacre*, V.v.4-8)

The 'Master Villain' so abused by the 'Common People' is a man already dead. The unseen Catholic mob are thus portrayed as monstrous figures, capable of acts of sickening barbarity. The audience's imagination is harnessed here by the gruesome vividness of Guise's speech to create an intense emotional response that might not be evoked merely by a painted flat scene depicting the corpse (the most likely staging, as suggested by Lee's elaborate stage directions for the opening of *Theodosius* [1680, I.i.i.]). Yet at this climactic moment Lee chooses to veer away from outright condemnation of Catholics. The King bursts on to the stage, deranged with guilt and grief, to decry his co-conspirators: 'O thou cruel Guise! / O Mother! Brother! and thou Murd'ring Priest!' (*Massacre*, V.v.9-10). He stresses the gulf between their actions and the faith they profess: 'call thy bloody Bark the Christian Church?' (*Massacre*, V.v.13). All seems set for the play to end echoing the Admiral's call for Protestant vengeance. Instead, however, Lee draws heavily on the philosophy of Francis Bacon (Stroup and Cooke, 1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.4; Van Lennep, 1933, pp.299-300) to denounce not Catholicism in itself, but all those who use religion as a pretext for evil deeds:

KING: For know, all Churches by Decree and Doctrine,
Kings by their Sword and Balance of their Justice,
All Learning, Christian, Moral, and Prophane,
Shall by the virtue of their Mercury Rod
For ever damn to Hell those curs'd Designs
That with Religion's Face to ruin tend,
And go by Heav'n to reach the blackest end.
(*Massacre*, V.v.23-29)

It is striking that the end of a play so overtly about Christian sectarianism should shift not only to encompass the secular and the base alongside religion but to equate them: 'All Learning, Christian, Moral, and Prophane' (*Massacre*, V.v.25). The word 'Prophane' is inserted by Lee into the source text, which refers to 'all learnings (Christian and moral)' (Bacon, 1612 [1985], pp.70-71). This suggests that Lee sought deliberately to widen the scope of Bacon's homily in order to condemn violence done in the name of religion as being worse than any blasphemy. Hence with the full weight of the play's emotional impact behind him, Lee hammers home the message that violence and cruelty can never be justified in the name of *any* religion. As Hunt (1969, pp.190-191) notes, the play contains no attack on Catholic doctrine itself; this implies that Lee seeks to convey the belief that true piety, of any religion, eschews wrongdoing. Thus, at the very last moment, Lee pulls back from outright anti-Catholicism to present a more nuanced and humanist message.

By criticising not only the supposed evils of Catholicism but also the folly of wilfully blind trust in Providence, Lee argues for moderation of religious fervour in *The Massacre of Paris*. He emphasises the importance of conscience in guiding the actions of the individual, not only to advocate a Protestant direct relationship with God, but also as a matter of personal moral responsibility. By taking this measured stance during the Popish Plot, Lee avoids knee-jerk anti-Catholicism, instead asking contemporary audiences to engage emotionally with historical events depicted in the play and consider the parallels with their own time.

2.4 Lee's adaptation of Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France*

It has been shown above that *The Massacre of Paris* is not merely anti-Catholic propaganda but a nuanced and complex tragedy. As Van Lennep (1933, pp.271-318) has demonstrated, Lee's main source for the play is Cotterell and Aylesbury's 1647 translation of Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France*, reprinted in 1678 as anti-Catholic feeling ran high in England. This section will argue that the inherent tensions and contradictions in the play's portrayal of Catholics and Protestants arise directly from Lee's treatment of his source material. It will demonstrate, for the first time, that Lee rejects opportunities offered by Davila's *History* to write propaganda, instead choosing to create dramatic symmetry between the leaders of each faction to suggest that the actions of both sides lead to disaster.

The Massacre of Paris follows Davila's narrative closely, at times even taking instances of direct speech from the source text almost verbatim. However, although Lee demonstrates punctilious attention to detail in his dramatization of real events, he takes a more freely theatrical approach to characterisation. While some aspects of the play's characters are lifted directly from Davila's descriptions, anchoring the play firmly in reality, other facets are embellished by Lee, or even invented entirely, to serve a dramatic purpose. This creates a paradox in the main characters, particularly in the Admiral of France, which is difficult to resolve. The resulting multifaceted, contradictory personas present a stylised, theatrical representation of human beings reacting to the extreme situations in which they find themselves. This gives *The Massacre of Paris* much of the emotional power noted by Lee's contemporaries (Brown, 1690, p.28).

As Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.4) note, Lee's 'heavy reliance' upon Davila is indicated by small details, such as the identification of the sniper who wounds the Admiral and the description of the injuries he inflicts:

> *Maurevell* … had the opportunity to shoot him with a brace of Bullets, one of which took off the fore-finger of his right hand, and the other wounded him grievously near the left elbow.

(Davila, 1678, pp.180-181)

MORVELE: I think I saw some of his Fingers fly,
And part of his left Arm: I'm sure I hit him.
(*Massacre*, V.i.130-132)

This attention to detail imbues *The Massacre of Paris* with a strong sense of realism. However, Lee goes beyond ensuring that all minor speaking parts are named. In the play's final scene, the prisoners executed by firing squad are listed individually by name in the stage directions, their order presumably indicating their positions on stage:

> *The Scene draws, showing the Commanders standing with their hands ty'd behind 'em betwixt the Souldiers in a rank.*
>
> *The Count de Rochfaucalt, Marquis de Renel, Piles, Pluvialt, Pardillan, and Lavardin.*

(*Massacre*, V.v.3)

All these names are taken from Davila (1678, pp.25, 178). They appear onstage as non-speaking roles among the Admiral's '*Commanders*' (*Massacre*, s.d., II.i.240) earlier in the play, having been summoned by their leader:

ADMIRAL: But now for Paris. Call Colombier,
The Count de Rochfaucalt, Marquis de Renel,
Piles, Pluvialt, Pardiallan, and Lavardin,
Bandine, and all my Gallants of the War.
(*Massacre*, II.i.177-180)

Of these, only Rochfaucalt, Columbier and Piles are identified individually when they appear:

ADMIRAL: O, my brave Friends? my dear la Rochfaucalt,
Your hand; and yours, my rough Colombier;
My Gallant Piles; and thine, my plain Langoiran.
(*Massacre*, II.i.240-242)

The Commanders are named again in the stage directions which open V.v, only to be shot dead one line later. Only two have been addressed by name previously. Individual identification of the other men is not conveyed to the audience in any way. It must be concluded that Lee has chosen to name these non-speaking characters out of a desire to be scrupulously faithful to his source. Similarly, the Admiral's murderers are named in the stage directions as Besnie and Sartabons (*Massacre*, V.iv.25-36), yet only Besnie speaks and neither are referred to by name by other characters. Davila (1678, p.183) identifies two of the Admiral's killers as 'one *Besme* a *Lorainer*, a Creature of the Duke of *Guise*'s' and 'Colonel *Sarlabous*'. The misspellings in the play may have been Lee's error or, as is perhaps more likely, that of a compositor in the printing house misreading Lee's manuscript. However, it is clear that, as in the previous example, Lee is following his source with minute precision. This thoroughness suggests that any departures Lee makes from Davila's *History* must be deliberate, and hence that they serve a dramatic or political purpose.

Lee's contradictory approach in adapting his source material can be explored by examining the ways in which he uses Davila's *History* to construct the character of the Admiral of France. Avoiding simplistic Protestant propaganda, Lee chooses not to create an entirely imaginary persona for the Admiral in order to present him as a great, untarnished Calvinist hero. Instead, he roots his portrayal in the facts as presented by a historian who, at times, criticises de Coligny severely. Lee's portrayal of the Admiral adheres closely to Davila's account in a strictly chronological sense, faithfully recording the series of events which leads to his death. However, Lee's rendering of the Admiral's character is complex. Sometimes it is closely based on Davila's description. Elsewhere, Lee departs from his source radically. At other times, the depiction lies somewhere between these two extremes as Lee embroiders

the facts Davila provides. Lee seems to acclaim the Admiral, holding him up as the epitome of Protestant heroism, yet throughout the play he draws heavily upon Davila's *History* to indicate de Coligny's faults. The combined effect is complicated and inherently contradictory.

Lee's laudatory portrayal of his protagonist is not unfounded: the Admiral's heroic qualities of leadership are stressed by Davila. He is possessed of many virtues: 'industry, valour, constancy and, above all, a marvellous ability in managing the greatest designs' (Davila, 1678, p.184). With all his considerable advantages, de Coligny, 'bred up from his youth in the chief Commands of War, and brought by his valour and conduct to the highest pitch of honour' (Davila, 1678, p.184) could have risen to 'all the greatest Offices of that Kingdom' (Davila, 1678, p.184). However, Lee's apparently clear-sighted acknowledgement of the Admiral's faults actually falls short, by some way, of the scathing assessment made by Davila. Although, throughout his *History*, Davila refers to the Admiral's Calvinist beliefs, these are presented solely as a motive for political manoeuvring. de Coligny's faith is not portrayed as a virtue, but rather as merely a characteristic of the faction to which he belongs. Unlike Lee's overtly Protestant leader who professes his faith openly ('[I] blew the coals of Calvin's kindled Doctrine' (*Massacre*, II.i.36)), Davila's Admiral is a shrewd and duplicitous politician ('always an Inventor of subtile counsels', Davila, 1678, p.47) whose only religion is ambition: he was 'through desire of Rule… united with the Hugonot party' (Davila, 1678, p.53). Hence, according to Davila, the historical Admiral was no divinely guided hero but a canny operator as driven by an insatiable hunger for power as the scheming Catholics Lee depicts. In sharp contrast to this, as discussed in Section 2.3 above, the sincere belief of Lee's Admiral is never in doubt. Hence by comparing *The Massacre of Paris* with Davila's *History*

it can be seen that Lee has chosen to amplify the Admiral's Huguenot faith considerably, inventing the Calvinist zeal that is the touchstone of the character. This ardent piety is combined with the military heroism described by Davila to bolster the factual Admiral's good qualities. Meanwhile, Lee inverts the historian's criticism of de Coligny's wily pursuit of power by reframing the Admiral's motivation as idealistic ambition harnessed in the Protestant cause. By engaging with Davila's *History* in this way, Lee portrays a model Protestant leader to inspire Restoration audiences.

The Massacre of Paris dramatizes the emotional trajectory of the Admiral of France from hostility and suspicion towards the ruling Catholics to fatal acceptance of their false assurances of friendship. Davila offers three possible explanations for the Admiral's willingness to ignore his own earlier, correct suspicions:

> …either believing that by his wisdom he had really gotten the Kings favour, and eclipsed the credit of all others; or deluded by the cunning dissimulations of the Court; or else drawn by the hidden power of Fate.

(Davila, 1678, p.179)

Davila's sustained emphasis on the Admiral's vanity implies the first of these. He asserts that the historical de Coligny was a self-satisfied egotist who 'presumed so much upon himself and his own authority, and was so infinitely pleased with the thoughts of the enterprize of *Flanders*, that he was far from doubting any sinister event' (Davila, 1678, p.179). Thus, according to Davila, the Admiral's arrogance cost him his life. However, Lee minimises this explanation by emphasising the latter two, thus turning away from portraying the Admiral's death as being mainly the result of his own folly. Throughout the play, the King and Queen Mother are shown repeatedly to be duplicitous ('I fear the truth, with tears I must avow it, / My Lord, you dare not trust the King and Me' (*Massacre*, V.ii.78-79)), and, as Armistead (1979, p.104) notes, the Admiral demonstrates a strongly Calvinist belief in the fixed nature

of his fate: ‘There is a Providence that over-rules: / Therefore submit’ (*Massacre*, V.ii.21-22). Thus, according to Lee, it is the Admiral’s faith in both God and King which causes his death, not his ambition. In seventeenth-century Protestantism, such faith is intrinsically linked to the concept of predestination. Fate also plays a significant role in classical tragedy. By connecting de Coligny’s staunch Huguenot belief with his downfall in this way, Lee suggests that his faith has become his fatal flaw. Therefore, by presenting the Admiral’s death as inevitable, Lee reframes Davila’s *History* to elevate de Coligny to the status of tragic hero.

Despite burnishing the Admiral’s reputation to create an inspiring hero for Protestant audiences, Lee portrays him as a flawed character, as discussed above. In doing so, he draws upon Davila’s account of de Coligny’s faults, weaving many details from his source material into the play creatively. Davila (1678, p.179) is fiercely critical of the Admiral’s arrogance: ‘despising all others, and even the King also, he esteemed himself the Oracle of *France*, and believed himself with small pains able to overturn all the attempts and practices of his enemies’. Lee uses this sentence in a speech which demonstrates not just the Admiral’s personal vanity but also the extent to which he has been flattered into believing what he wants to believe, that the King looks favourably upon the Huguenots:

ADMIRAL: Why should I fear, Cavagnes, when the King
Inclines his heart to the Reform’d Religion;
When the whole management of Home-affairs,
With all Confederacies made abroad,
Are left to me, as Judge and Arbitrator,
The Genius and the Oracle of France?
(*Massacre*, IV.ii.39-44)

Once again, the Admiral identifies himself here as the personification of the Protestant faith; in his eyes, the favour the King shows him equates to goodwill towards the ‘Reform’d Religion’. However, his conceit in viewing himself as the spirit of his country (‘The Genius

and Oracle of France') is tempered by placing matters of religion first in this speech, implying that the Admiral's staunch faith is always at the forefront of his mind. Hence Lee has acknowledged Davila's criticism here but deflects it by emphasising de Coligny's godliness.

Lee also uses his source material inventively by placing some of Davila's assertions into the speeches of Catholic characters, thus reframing criticism to show the Admiral in a more flattering light. In IV.i, the Queen Mother instructs Guise to force a quarrel upon the Admiral so that the King may be seen to take the Admiral's side, thus convincing de Coligny of his friendship. Guise relishes the opportunity to express 'with keen words' (*Massacre*, IV.i.57) the grudge he bears the man who, he believes, caused his father's death. In the subsequent scene Lee focuses on one of Davila's lengthiest and most withering criticisms of the Admiral's conceit:

> … he was so puffed up, that growing to an unmeasureable height of pride, he spake so boastingly of himself, that he became almost intolerable to his nearest and most partial friends; and was often heard to say, that neither *Alexander* the Great, nor *Julius Caesar* could be compared to him; for both of them had always had favourable and prosperous success; but he having lost four Battels, had in spite and to the shame of ill fortune, by his valour and policy, always risen again more dreadful and terrible to his Enemies: and lastly, when all men thought he had no way left to save his life, but to flee, and wander about the world, he had managed his affairs so well, as brought his Enemies to a necessity, not only of making peace with him, but also of granting him conditions more proper for a Conquerour, than one that was overcome.

(Davila, 1678, p.179)

In Lee's hands, the harsh retrospective assessment of a historian becomes the bitter, mocking diatribe of the Admiral's sworn enemy, intent on picking a fight with de Coligny and expressing 'the Venom / That swells [him] all within' (*Massacre*, IV.i.58-59):

GUISE: But you, whose life is one continu'd Battel,
What will not your Triumphant Arms accomplish?
Who, as your self confess'd, or Fame is false,
Have quite out-gone the memory of the Ancients,
Of Alexander, and of Julius Caesar,
For they in all their Actions had success;

> But you, in spite of your malicious Fortune,
> After the loss of four most signal Battels,
> Still rose more fierce and dreadful to your Foes:
> And last, when all men thought you had no way
> To save your life, but wander through the World;
> You forc'd the King to grant your own Conditions,
> More proper for a Conquerour than one
> That was o'ercome.

(*Massacre*, IV.ii.73-86)

Hence Lee has been faithful to his source material, quoting Davila almost verbatim in places, yet has altered its meaning greatly through his choice of speaker. By using Davila's *History* in this way, the Admiral's faults are acknowledged but the damage to his reputation is controlled and he retains both the moral high ground and his heroic status. In this way, Lee demonstrates a telling use of language, showing an understanding of how drastically the meaning of words may shift when their context is altered.

By balancing the Admiral's documented negative qualities against his (perhaps fictional) deeply-held love of God, wife and country, Lee makes him a compelling tragic hero. Through the machinations of his enemies, de Coligny's faith is misdirected to become a fatal flaw as great as his own ego. The qualities which Lee adds to the character of the Admiral to make him heroic – his spirituality, his goodness, his ardent desire to serve both God and King – are lent verisimilitude by the apparently realistic depiction of his faults. This credibility is strengthened further by Lee's meticulous use of minutely accurate historical detail throughout the play, which lends the work an air of authority. Lee creates a dichotomy by amplifying the virtues of the Admiral's Huguenot faith while retaining many of the vices described by Davila. This creates a rounded, complex character which reflects the reality that all human beings are multifaceted. Had Lee intended *The Massacre of Paris* simply to be a piece of anti-Catholic propaganda, it would have been sufficient to portray the Admiral as a one-

dimensional noble Protestant martyr hounded to his death by wicked popish schemes. In choosing instead to acknowledge the flaws in de Coligny's personality as described by Davila, and to do so with such close attention to the source material, Lee combines historical accuracy with theatricality. The character of the Admiral is, then, both a dramatic representation of a real person and a figure drawn from the traditions of classical tragedy. Thus Lee has shaped the Admiral of France into a Protestant symbol for Restoration audiences, using Davila's account of the Admiral's faults to humanise him as a truly tragic hero whose flaws contribute inexorably to his own downfall. By emphasising the Admiral's Huguenot faith and making him a considerably more heroic figure than the ambitious braggart portrayed by Davila, Lee reframes the historical events he dramatizes. *The Massacre of Paris* becomes an emotive human tragedy about a religious sect persecuted for its faith rather than a play about rival political factions jostling for power in which religion is reduced to a mere sideshow. The considered way in which Lee has chosen to adapt his source material to favour the Admiral while preserving his faults demonstrates that *The Massacre of Paris* is indeed intended as an anti-Catholic play, albeit one that acknowledges that Protestants, like all mortals, are imperfect beings.

Similarly, in his portrayal of the King of France, Lee avoids simplistic characterisation. As with his depiction of the Admiral, Lee draws upon Davila's *History* in his portrayal of Charles IX, paying close attention to historical events but introducing new elements to the King's character which develop the play's tragic themes. In contrast to Lee's weak, easily led monarch, Davila depicts the King as the driving force behind the massacre, using his talent for 'dissimulation (a quality wherein he much excelled)' (Davila, 1678, p.173) to plot with the Queen Mother: 'the King and the Queen his Mother, for fear they should be discovered, had

not imparted to any body those their so secret counsels' (Davila, 1678, p.173). Lee's King ultimately condemns the massacre, maddened by grief and guilt (*Massacre*, V.v.9-29). Yet, according to Davila, Charles IX 'earnestly endeavoured to perswade [the magistrates] that the business had been sudden, and not premeditate, happening in a manner by chance, and urged by necessity' (Davila, 1678, p.185). Brazenly claiming self-defence in this way, the King of France covered up his own conspiracy and justified a sectarian atrocity: 'it was credibly reported that there were slain above forty thousand Hugonots in a few days' (Davila, 1678, p.185). In drawing on Davila's sustained depiction of a Catholic king 'of so hasty cholerick a nature' (Davila, 1678, p.176), Lee has ample grounds to portray Charles IX of France simply as a calculating, sadistic despot. However, once again he avoids one-dimensional characterisation, choosing instead to depict a weak, volatile man tortured by his own innate sense of morality:

KING: O Mother, oh, what's this that rends my heart,
That rides my Nights, and clouds my Days with horror?
Is it not Conscience?
(*Massacre*, I.ii.133-135)

Charles's conscience is rooted in genuine Christian belief: 'Behold these streams [of tears], with which his Soul aspires / To slake your wrath, and quench your angry fires' (*Massacre*, V.i.15-16). Thus the King's rejection of what is right and godly and his subsequent decline towards madness and death ('Pale Hugonots… haunt me up and down / Through Chambers, into Closets, Beds, and Couches', *Massacre*, V.v.15-16; 'take my dying Counsel', *Massacre*, V.v.21) shape him into a figure as tragic as the Admiral, a potentially good monarch destroyed by the weakness of both his will and his faith in God.

The multifaceted characterisations of the Admiral and the King of France demonstrate that *The Massacre of Paris* is more than the 'digest of history' described by Armistead (1979,

p.94). Lee's departures from Davila's narrative create symmetry between the Protestant and Catholic leaders. The King's malleable nature and vacillating conscience mirror the Admiral's obstinacy and titanic self-belief, the flaws of both characters contributing equally to bringing about the massacre. Similarly, the King's faltering Catholic faith is as much a cause of the disaster as the Admiral's zealous Calvinism, leading him to sanction mass murder. By introducing such contrasting and complementary qualities into his portrayals of both the King and the Admiral, Lee transforms Davila's representation of history into a balanced theatrical work which presents complex, nuanced and contradictory characters. Lee's Protestant hero and Catholic antagonist have greater emotional depths than the ruthless political schemers Davila describes. By adapting his source material in this way, Lee's deliberate rejection of the opportunity for partisan one-dimensional characterisation moves *The Massacre of Paris* away from being merely anti-Catholic propaganda towards something far richer. As Butler (2004, p.206) notes, 'Lee must have been all too aware' that effective propaganda requires clearly drawn ideological positions 'yet deliberately contravenes the practice by presenting no one character or ideology uncritically'. In this way, Lee demands that audiences engage actively with the play as drama rather than consume it passively as propaganda. Lee's historical accuracy in small details implies veracity in his characterisations to an audience, creating a sense of heightened realism that invites deep emotional involvement, resulting in powerful catharsis. Hence comparing *The Massacre of Paris* with Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France* demonstrates that, in writing this play, Lee sought to create a tragedy of real theatrical merit.

2.5 Early Modern elements in *The Massacre of Paris*

Despite its title, *The Massacre of Paris* is unconnected to Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris* (c.1592). Van Lennep (1933, pp.319-320) argues that Lee would have been unfamiliar with

Marlowe's play, which was printed only once during Lee's lifetime and not staged. Lee's focus upon the tragic downfall of the Admiral contrasts markedly with Marlowe's play, which attacks Catholicism by dramatizing sensationally a succession of violent incidents from this period of French history. Nevertheless, aspects of *The Massacre of Paris* do resemble Early Modern tragedy. The play's murderous denouement has caused several critics to label it 'Jacobean' (Brown, 1983, p.397; Stroup and Cooke, 1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.5). Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.5) argue that the 'excessive bloodshed' which concludes *The Massacre of Paris* is one of several elements which, together with 'the use of portents, the extreme cruelty of [the Catholic leaders], the intrigue and plotting', suggest strongly that Lee 'consciously followed the revenge-play tradition'. Yet, as this section will show, many tropes in *The Massacre of Paris* associated with revenge tragedy, such as the apparently stock characters and the play's climactic bloody violence, are to be found Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France*. Lee's close dependence on this source shapes the genre of his play.

Criticism of *The Massacre of Paris* has frequently focused upon the graphic violence portrayed in Act V. Both Hermanson (2014, pp.18, 72-73) and Hume (1976b [1990], p.201) class it as a horror play; Hume describes it as 'an orgy of poisoning and knifing of Huguenots'. However, Brown (1983, p.397) argues that the onstage murders are 'not gratuitous… since Lee is obviously calculating that such violence will be interpreted as spiritual wickedness' and Schille (1988, p.38) suggests that Lee portrays violence to create the perception of a world collapsing into chaos. Yet to view the bloodshed as an indicator of genre or as imagery overlooks the fact that the play is a dramatization of real events. The physical violence Lee depicts is not a metaphor but an unpleasant truth which he demands that the audience must witness. The play's title is *The Massacre of Paris*: this is the focus of

Lee's tragedy. Dramatizing the deaths of the Admiral and his followers, a small group of characters, in a strongly emotive and graphic way enables Lee to portray the state-sanctioned murder of thousands of Huguenots within the limitations of the Carolean stage. The play's structure reflects the way that 'Lee traps his characters in a *huis clos* setting, the corrupt French court' (Slaney, 2013, p.67). Throughout Act V, as the Huguenots' fate hurtles towards them inexorably, Lee uses successively shorter scene lengths to convey an increasingly claustrophobic sense of horrific events accelerating out of control: V.i has 227 lines, V.ii 109 lines and V.iii 36 lines. As Slaney (2013, p.67) notes, Lee 'make[s] spectacular use of the inner stage [by] engineer[ing] a double reveal' at the start of V.v. The execution of the Protestant commanders by firing squad (V.v.1-3) is succeeded immediately by the spectacle of the Admiral's burning corpse (V.v.4-8), these events lasting three lines and five lines respectively. These closely-packed visual and emotional shocks are followed by the exaggerated psychic horror of the King's madness (V.v.9-29) in the concluding twenty-one lines of the play. The cumulative effect is intended to produce a powerful tragic catharsis. Contemporary reports of distraught audiences (Brown, 1690, p.28) suggest that Lee's design was successful. Hence by evoking such strong emotions in an intimate setting, a technique in which 'the microcosm of human pain [represents] the macrocosm of universal catastrophe' (Slaney, 2013, p.53), Lee works within the parameters of theatre to convey the atrocity of the slaughter of thousands of people offstage. Thus the onstage violence in *The Massacre of Paris* is neither gratuitous nor born merely of a desire to shock. Rather, it is stylised realism, consistent with Lee's intention to render Davila's description of historical events faithfully within the limitations of theatre, and thus it is intrinsic to the play's function as a tragedy.

The play's *dramatis personae* appear to include familiar figures from revenge tragedy: the wicked Queen Mother, the corrupt churchman, the beautiful but unhinged young woman and the cynical avenger. Nevertheless, their characterisations are rooted in history. Catherine de Medici was indeed a powerful ruler who schemed with her son to advance the massacre of the Huguenots ('the King and Queen [Mother were] desirous once more to accomplish their determinations', Davila, 1678, p.172). The Cardinal of Lorrain did take an active part in the conspiracy: 'the Cardinal of *Lorain*… having agreed secretly with the King, [pretended] to be very ill satisfied with… the favours done to the Hugonots' (Davila, 1678, p.173). Lee's portrayal of the Duke of Guise demonstrates the way in which he unites historical accuracy with theatricality. Guise appears the archetypal malcontent avenger, whose desire for the King's sister is far outweighed by his hatred of the Admiral, who he believes killed his father:

GUISE: Were Marguerite all one World of Pleasure,
I'de sell her, and my Soul, for such Revenge.
(*Massacre*, I.i.127-128)

Lee implies that Guise seduces Marguerite to gain power at court: 'I love, 'tis true; but most for my Ambition; / Therefore I thought to marry Marguerite' *(Massacre*, I.i.94-95). Blocked by the manoeuvring of 'The Regent Mother, and that Dog Anjou' (*Massacre*, I.i.97) and humiliated by the King ('He, sharp and short, / Retorted thus; He did not need my Service', *Massacre*, I.i.104-105), Guise is open to the guidance of his uncle, the Cardinal of Lorrain (''Tis plain, you must resolve, my Lord, to quit her', *Massacre*, I.i.106). His thwarted ambition is thus channelled into a reckless thirst for vengeance:

CARDINAL: Speak lower.
GUISE: What, upon my Father's Death!
O glorious Guise, be calm upon thy Murder!
No; I will hollow my Revenge so loud,
That his great Ghost shall hear me up to Heav'n.
(*Massacre*, I.i.129-132)

The avenging of a murdered father and the allusion to his ghost recalls Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. As Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968]), Vol.2, p.575) note, Guise's desire to kill the Admiral while he sins echoes Hamlet's refusal to kill Claudius while he is at prayer (Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, III.iii.88-95):

GUISE: Kill him in Riots, Pride, and Lust of Pleasures,
That I may add Damnation to the rest,
And foil his Soul and Body both together.
(*Massacre*, I.i.143-145)

All this suggests that Guise is a derivative character, a stock figure copied from Early Modern revenge tragedy. However, Lee's portrayal is entirely in accordance with Davila's description of Guise's motivation:

> … his ambition of governing, and desire to revenge his Fathers death, the perswasions of his Uncle [the Cardinal], and chiefly fear to offend the King, were more powerful with him than any other considerations whatsoever [i.e. love for Marguerite].

(Davila, 1678, p.173)

In depicting Guise's fractious relationship with the King, once again Lee lifts minor details from Davila's *History* verbatim to give his portayal veracity (see *Massacre*, I.i.104-105, quoted above):

> … the King, who stood at the door, (without shewing any of his accustomed favours) asked him, Whither he went? to which he answering, That he came to serve his Majesty; the King replyed, That he had no need of his service.

(Davila, 1678, p.173)

Thus Lee's Guise is not a stereotyped character created to serve the requirements of the plot but a dramatically stylised portrayal of the real Duke of Guise which highlights his strong resemblance to a figure from Early Modern revenge tragedy.

Conversely, in his portrayal of the King's sister, Lee embellishes Davila's *History* with Early Modern flourishes to present Marguerite as the heroine of a revenge tragedy. Marguerite's stormy relationship with Guise is inspired by Davila's *History*:

> And because the *Lady Marguerite* not considering the interests of State, but led wholly by her own affection, refused any other Husband but the Duke of *Guise*… [Guise, attending a ball, said t]hat he came to serve his Majesty; the King replyed, That he had no need of his service; which, whether it was spoken in jest or earnest, touched him so to the quick, that the next day he resolved to take to Wife *Katherine de Cleves*, … Widow to the Prince of *Porcien*, who … was in every respect… much inferior to the Kings Sister.

(Davila, 1678, p.173)

Accordingly, Lee characterises Marguerite as a disquietingly possessive lover ('You shou'd, like me, have stagger'd when you left me, / And eat your Marguerite with your hungry Eyes', *Massacre*, I.i.55-56) whose jealousy is disturbingly sadomasochistic: 'O, I could cut my face! what, for a Widow! / Leave me for Porcien!' (*Massacre*, III.ii.103-104). Slaney (2014, p.53) observes that Lee creates horror by 'deploying highly figured, non-mimetic dramatic language' and depicting 'characters with no control over the passions that possess them'. This is demonstrated by the unnervingly eroticised images of torture conjured by Marguerite's ravings:

MARGUERITE: Why should you make me rave with Jealousie?
For, oh, I love beyond all former Passion:
Dye for him! that's too little; I could burn
Piece-Meal away, or bleed to Death by drops,
Be flead alive, then broke upon the Wheel,
Yet with a Smile endure it all for Guise:
And when let loose from Torments, all one wound,
Run with my mangled Arms, and crush him dead.

(*Massacre*, III.i.20-27)

Marguerite's sexualised madness, her morbid association of love with death ('To wed my Tomb, to dwell in dust below, / Where we shall see no more deceitful Men', *Massacre*, III.i.48), and her passionate opposition to the worldly motivations that drive the Catholic court ('I love him more / Than you love Glory, Vengeance and Ambition', *Massacre*, III.i.8-9) identify her unmistakeably as a figure drawn from Early Modern tragedy. According to Davila, the historical Marguerite deplored her forced marriage to the King of Navarre and remained loyal to Guise:

> … the King her Brother having with his hand made her yield and bow down her head, it was reported that she shewed her consent by that action; though she both before and after, when she could speak freely, declared always, that not only to be deprived of the Duke of *Guise*… but also to make his capital Enemy her Husband, were things wherewith she could not possibly bring her mind to be contented.

(Davila, 1678, p.180)

By contrast, Lee fashions Marguerite into a tragic heroine whose revulsion at the Catholic plot ('Infamy, Vengeance, Murder, Massacre!', *Massacre*, V.i.144) transforms her ardent passion for the murderous Guise ('Death shall not force my Soul to wed Navarre', *Massacre*, III.ii.170) into noble loyalty to the Protestant husband she does not love ('Save [Navarre], if possible, / And so farewel, thou Ruine of my Glory', *Massacre*, V.i.202-203). In this way, as the only Catholic character to abhor the massacre ('this most horrid Vengeance[…] / At which the Earth shall sicken, Saints be sad', *Massacre*, V.i.165-166), Marguerite regains her lost honour. In achieving redemption by renouncing earthly love, she gains tragic stature, contributing to the play's climactic catharsis. Thus, through the character of Marguerite, Lee blends recognisable elements of revenge tragedy into Davila's *History*, complementing the elements of Early Modern drama already present in Marguerite's lover, Guise.

Hence it can be seen that the 'Jacobean' style of *The Massacre of Paris* is rooted strongly in Lee's close reliance upon Davila's *History*. Once again, as with his portrayal of Catholic and Protestant factions, Lee employs a contradictory approach to adaptation, following his source material faithfully in some ways while at the same time blending in opposing fictional elements for theatrical effect. In doing so, he presents a narrative drawn from Early Modern French history as a revenge tragedy in the style of that era's English dramatists, who he admired greatly ('the thoughts of [Shakespeare]… and the softness and passionate expressions of [Fletcher]… are never to be match'd', *Mithridates*, 1678, dedicatory epistle, ll.51-53). Lee's decision to fashion *The Massacre of Paris* in this way demonstrates that he saw

parallels not only between French history and events unfolding in contemporary England, but also between French history and English Early Modern revenge tragedy.

Ironically, the historical incident most reminiscent of Jacobean revenge tragedy is omitted from the printed text of *The Massacre of Paris* because, after its ban, Lee decided to reuse material from the play in other works. Davila describes how, in deference to the Queen of Navarre's status as 'a Woman and a Queen', the Catholic Court 'thought fittest to take her away by poison, administered as was reported in the perfume or trimming of a pair of Gloves… in such secret manner' (1678, pp.178-179). Poisoning by elaborate and clandestine means is a well-worn trope of Early Modern revenge tragedy, so this murder would have contributed significantly to the Jacobean style which Lee establishes through characterisation in *The Massacre of Paris*. Yet in the printed text of the play, the offstage assassination is passed over briskly as the Catholic leaders plan their next move against the Huguenots:

KING: Because a Woman, and of Royal Blood,
My Mother judg'd that she should dye by Poison.
QUEEN MOTHER: Dispatch'd with Sweets. Pass to the rest; she's dead.
(*Massacre*, IV.i.29-31)

The killing of the Queen of Navarre has become a mundane, functional murder, stripped of Jacobean artistry and serving only to advance the plot. It seems curious that Lee would choose to omit such an intrinsically theatrical death, particularly considering that he follows his source material so faithfully in other, more trivial, matters. However, there is evidence that the murder was included in the original manuscript of the play. Van Lennep (1933, p.309) and Armistead (1979, pp.96-97) argue that, after *The Massacre of Paris* was banned, Lee reused material relating to the murder of the Queen of Navarre in his next play, the luridly anti-Catholic *Caesar Borgia* (1680). In that work, the scheming antihero Machiavel

murders Adorna, confidante of the heroine Bellamira, in a manner taken straight from Davila's *History*:

MACHIAVEL: Are the Gloves brought I sent to the Perfumers?
ALONZO: They are.
MACHIAVEL: Where is Adorna?
ALONZO: She waits without.
MACHIAVEL: As you see her enter,
Bring me the Gloves: 'T were easie strangling her,
But this is quainter.
[…]
ADORNA: Now give me the dear Present.
See, see, my Lord, they are emboss'd with Jewels,
And cast so rich an odour, they o'ercome me. –
Help me – my Lord – O help me – lend your Arm –
The Earth turns round with me! O mercy, Heaven – [*Dies*.
(*Caesar Borgia*, 1680, IV.i.301-320)

This passage does not drop smoothly back into *The Massacre of Paris*, implying that Lee cut a much longer scene from the original manuscript of his banned play and adapted it to fit the new work. In *The Massacre of Paris*, the Queen of Navarre enters with the Admiral and the Huguenot entourage at the beginning of III.iii, yet she has no dialogue. Her death is reported at the start of the next act. This suggests that, having appeared in *Caesar Borgia* in 1680, the poisoned gloves assassination was cut from the end of Act III in order to avoid repetition when *The Massacre of Paris* was finally permitted to appear on stage in 1689 after Lee's release from Bedlam. When Lee revised the play for performance and publication, he chose not to write a replacement murder scene. Either he wished to maintain the play's historical accuracy as far as possible by skimming over the method of assassination, or at this stage of his life he lacked the creative energy to invent a plausible death in keeping with his source material. *The Massacre of Paris* is no less effective overall as a tragedy for the omission of the murder scene. However, had the death of the Queen of Navarre appeared in print in its original form, it is likely that the incident would have been considered overtly Jacobean, perhaps even dismissed as pastiche, despite the scene's foundation in fact.

Lee's desire to salvage material from *The Massacre of Paris* in this way influenced the rest of his career. After reusing the murder of the Queen of Navarre in *Caesar Borgia*, he went on to recycle elements of *The Massacre of Paris* to a far greater extent in *The Princess of Cleve* (staged c.1680, printed 1689) and *The Duke of Guise*, his 1682 collaboration with Dryden. The remaining chapters of this thesis will explore in depth the methods by which Lee performed this adaptation of his own work and his reasons for doing so.

2.6 Conclusion

In previous scholarship, *The Massacre of Paris* has not been considered one of Lee's major works. Perhaps because of its unusual textual and performance history, the play has often been overshadowed by the controversy generated by *The Duke of Guise* (see Section 3.1) and consequently criticised through the prism of contemporary politics. As a result, it has often been viewed as crude propaganda banned for stoking anti-Catholic paranoia during the Popish Plot. However, as this chapter has shown, *The Massacre of Paris* rewards close inspection, proving to be as complex and multifaceted as the characters it portrays. Lee's close dependence on Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France* influences every aspect of the play, from plot and characterisation to genre. The dichotomy inherent in Lee's treatment of his source material is transmitted to his characters, elevating them from ciphers to tragic figures who embody human contradictions. The realism that Lee achieves through his attention to historical detail gives the play much of its force by combining with the characters' intense emotions to present a powerful evocation of the horror of sectarian violence. As Armistead (1979, pp.94-95) notes, Lee does not reshape historical events but 'shades them with tragic significance' through his embellishment of Davila's *History*. The St

Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572 is presented as a fatal combination of Catholic scheming and Protestant fanaticism, resulting inevitably in the deaths of thousands of Huguenots. The play's anti-Catholicism is tempered by Lee's acknowledgement of the dangers of Protestant zealotry, and its humanist conclusion condemns all who use religion as a pretext for violence.

The complexity of Lee's adaptation of Davila's *History* suggests that previous critical assumptions regarding the suppression of *The Massacre of Paris* should be questioned. As stated above, *The Massacre of Paris* was banned c.1679 before it could be performed. Most critics (Barbour, 1940, p.113; Brown, 1983, p.388; Brown, 1985, p.19; Canfield, 1985, p.247; Hermanson, 2014, p.84; Hughes, 1996, p.269; Slaney, 2013, pp.52-53) ascribe this to its perception by those in power as an offensively anti-Catholic work. Alternatively, Armistead (1979, p.95) suggests that the 'fiercely anti-Catholic and anti-French' play was banned because Lee had angered Charles Killigrew, the Master of Revels, by defecting from the King's Company to the Duke's Company, while Rangno (1973, pp.42-48) argues that *The Massacre of Paris* was banned because it would fuel the public's fear of France's increasing power at a time when the English government sought to avoid a war. However, the meticulous accuracy with which Lee depicts historical events suggests another explanation. As discussed above, Lee's adaptation of Davila's *History* presents both the Catholic and Protestant leaders as nuanced, contradictory characters rather than as ciphers used to represent opposing sides. This suggests that *The Massacre of Paris* was intended to be a complex tragedy rather than a straightforwardly provocative attack on Catholicism. Indeed, Lee's subsequent work, *Caesar Borgia*, is a far better example of rabidly anti-Catholic propaganda. That play bludgeons its audience with its lurid depiction of sexual jealousy among rapacious

continental clergy, orchestrated by Machiavelli himself and seasoned with elaborate murders and the torture of a child ('Come, come, pull out his eyes, / And make a Cupid of the little Bastard', *Caesar Borgia*, 1680, III.i.29-30). Any criticism of Catholicism implicit in *The Massacre of Paris* appears mild by comparison. Displays of anti-Catholicism were *de rigeur* amid the paranoia of 1679-1681. Even Charles II felt unable to show clemency to Catholics accused by Titus Oates and others of plotting against the state since 'his enemies were still waiting for him to make a false step' (Kenyon, 1972 [2000], p.234). Dryden's 1683 pamphlet *The Vindication* attacks contemporary critics of *The Duke of Guise* (1683), his collaboration with Lee which recycles scenes from *The Massacre of Paris* (see Chapter 3). According to Dryden (1683, p.41), *The Massacre of Paris* was banned at the request of the French ambassador, Paul de Barillon: 'I have enquired, why it was not Acted, and heard it was stopt, by the interposition of an *Ambassador*, who was willing to save the Credit of his Country, and not to have the Memory of an Action so barbarous, reviv'd'. Kenyon (1972 [2000], p.252) notes that the Spanish and Portuguese ambassadors were active in helping English Catholics escape persecution but the French ambassador was 'comparatively passive'. It seems unlikely that de Barillon would not take action to oppose the persecution of priests but would object to Lee's play on the grounds of anti-Catholicism, particularly at a time when other anti-Catholic works such as Settle's *The Female Prelate* (1680) were allowed to be staged. Dryden states explicitly that de Barillon sought to 'save the Credit of his Country' in seeking the ban. Thus it is clear that the ambassador's objection was not to the play's anti-Catholicism or its negative portrayal of the French but to Lee's historically accurate depiction of 'the Memory of an Action so barbarous'. In the late 1670s and early 1680s, Louis XIV pursued an aggressive policy of increased persecution of Huguenots, culminating in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 (Prestwich, 1988). With this legal protection of the right to practise

their faith removed, many Huguenots fled France in fear of their lives. Hence it is likely that *The Massacre of Paris* was banned not for anti-Catholicism or for generalised anti-Gallicism but for, perhaps inadvertently, drawing attention to the obvious historical parallel with events unfolding in contemporary France. Criticism of Louis XIV's treatment of Protestants could not be permitted by Charles II, who had signed the Treaty of Dover between England and France in 1670. This included a secret clause in which Charles agreed to announce his own conversion to Catholicism; in return, Louis would supply French troops to quell English unrest at the change of national religion (Kenyon, 1972 [2000], p.16). Hence it is unsurprising that the French ambassador's complaint was upheld and *The Massacre of Paris* was banned until a Protestant monarch returned to the English throne a decade later. Unwittingly, through his scrupulous pursuit of historical accuracy, Nathaniel Lee brought about his own misfortune. Hence dismissing *The Massacre of Paris* as anti-Catholic propaganda overlooks not only the complexity of Lee's treatment of his source but also the play's wider contemporary social and political contexts.

As this chapter has demonstrated, *The Massacre of Paris* is considerably more than simplistic propaganda written to foment unrest during the Popish Plot of 1678-9. It is a carefully crafted tragedy which adapts Davila's *History* inventively. Lee declared that '[t]he Play cost [him] much pains' (*Cleve*, dedicatory epistle, l.11). Its ban must have been a bitter disappointment to him. However, as Chapters 3 and 4 will show, Lee salvaged the text in subsequent works with ingenuity.

3. *THE DUKE OF GUISE*

3.1 Introduction

In the decade that elapsed between the banning of *The Massacre of Paris* and its eventual performance, Lee plundered his manuscript, reusing significant amounts of text in both the bawdy comedy *The Princess of Cleve* (staged c.1680, printed 1689) and the political parallel *The Duke of Guise* (staged 1682, printed 1683). The contemporary controversy surrounding the latter play has been the main focus of previous critical attention, particularly with respect to Lee's political beliefs and, to a much greater extent, those of his co-author, the Poet Laureate John Dryden. Comparatively little attention has been paid to Lee's decision to cannibalise his earlier work and fit it to a new narrative. Although Van Lennep (1933, pp.309, 393-398, 542-552) was the first to identify Lee's reuse of text from *The Massacre of Paris* in other works, no previous investigation has been made into Lee's intentions in doing so. This chapter will examine the unusual way in which Lee composes his parts of *The Duke of Guise* and will show that, in writing the new play, he attempts to repackage *The Massacre of Paris* in a form which is acceptable to the Lord Chamberlain. This section will describe the political background to the composition of *The Duke of Guise* and the play's stage and print history, explaining its relationship to *The Massacre of Paris*. It will then summarise the passages from *The Massacre of Paris* which Lee transposes into *The Duke of Guise*. Through close analysis, Section 3.2 will show that Lee constructs his parts of *The Duke of Guise* in such a way as to recreate the emotional dynamics of *The Massacre of Paris*. Informed by this, Section 3.3 will consider the extent to which *The Duke of Guise* signals a change in Lee's political beliefs, as some critics have claimed to be the case. The chapter will conclude by evaluating the relative dramatic merits of *The Massacre of Paris* and *The Duke of Guise*.

The Duke of Guise was Lee's second collaboration with Dryden, following their success with *Oedipus* four years earlier. Like *The Massacre of Paris*, the play dramatizes events from sixteenth-century French history, drawing once again upon Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France* (1678). Unlike *The Massacre of Paris*, which addresses contemporary concerns in general terms, *The Duke of Guise* is an overtly topical play. It emphasises correspondence between historical political events, both in sixteenth-century France and in 1640s England, and the recent Exclusion Crisis: 'Our Play's a Parallel: The Holy League / Begot our Cov'nant: Guisards got the Whigg' (*Guise*, prologue, ll.1-2). The plot of *The Duke of Guise* addresses the further political turbulence which ensued in France in the years following the events depicted in *The Massacre of Paris*. In 1576, angered by Henri III's conciliatory treatment of the Huguenots, French nobles, led by the Duke of Guise, formed the Holy League. Although its main aim was to defend the Catholic religion, the League also sought to limit the king's power. When the Protestant Henri of Navarre became heir to the French throne in 1584, the Holy League attempted to exclude him from the succession. These events had strong resonance in Restoration England. The Whigs, led by the Earl of Shaftesbury, called for the heir to the throne, the Catholic Duke of York, to be excluded from the line of succession in favour of Charles II's Protestant illegitimate eldest son, James Scott, Duke of Monmouth. The parallels between the times were unmistakeable. As Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.391) observe, the Holy League's seditious Council of Sixteen 'recalls the sixteen Whig peers who petitioned Charles in February 1681 not to hold a Parliament at Oxford' and the League's plot to abduct Henri III 'parallels the plot the Tories claimed to have discovered' in documents in Shaftesbury's possession. The coincidences continued. In 1588, against the King's orders, Guise marched in triumph into Paris; in 1679,

Monmouth returned to London against his father's wishes and was acclaimed by the people of the city. Having lost control of Paris, Henri III called the Estates General to the city of Blois; in 1681, aware that the Whig-controlled City of London would oppose him, Charles II called Parliament to Oxford to ensure that he could prevent the vote for York's exclusion being carried. By extrapolation, other events depicted in the play seemed to offer a dire warning against the Whig faction. In May 1588, the people of Paris rose against the King and Henri III was forced to accede to the Holy League's demands. Guise became Lieutenant General of the kingdom, ruler in all but name, and it was declared that no Protestant could succeed to the French throne. Humiliated, Henri III moved to re-establish his authority forcefully. Guise was summoned to a Council meeting by royal command and stabbed to death by the king's bodyguards. To those who identified Henri III with Charles II, Guise with Monmouth and Guise's devil-summoning henchman Malicorne with the Whig leader Shaftesbury, the play seemed to advise the King to execute his son to protect his crown. Hence by dramatizing this particular episode of French history in the immediate aftermath of the Exclusion Crisis, Lee and Dryden produced a topical drama which, unsurprisingly, proved extremely controversial:

> Ther is a play hear to be acted that maks a great business, for the Duke of Munmuth has complained of it, and they say that notwithstanding it is to be acted sometime nixt weik. They call it the Duke of Guise, but in the play the true story is cheinged to the plott time hear.

(John Drummond to the Marquis of Buccleuch and Queensberry, 16 July 1682, London Stage Database, 2021.)

As a contemporary newsletter describes, the apparent attack on Monmouth in *The Duke of Guise* displeased Charles II:

> A play having been made [by] Mr Dryden termed ye Duke of Guise supposed to Levell att the villifying the Duke of Monmouth & many other protestants & great Interest made for the Acting thereof but bringing to the knowledge of his Ma[jes]tie the same was forbidd for though his Ma[jes]ties pleasure is to be dissatisfyed and

> angry with the Duke of Monmouth, yet hee is not willing that others should abuse him out of a naturall affection for him.

(Newdigate newsletters, 29 July 1682, London Stage Database, 2021)

Consequently, as soon as it had been completed, *The Duke of Guise* was banned by the Lord Chamberlain in July 1682 (Dryden, 1683, p.2). However, by November of that year the political climate had changed. Charles had regained control over the City of London, ousting the Whigs and strengthening Tory power. Shaftesbury was in exile and Monmouth was chastened. Now having less potential to stoke unrest, *The Duke of Guise* received royal approval and was performed before the Queen on 1 December 1682. Perhaps because of its strong topicality, the play was not revived after its initial run.

The Duke of Guise polarised contemporary audiences. It may be true that, as Harth (1993, p.201) suggests, in highlighting the parallel with sixteenth-century France, Dryden and Lee intended their play to reflect favourably on Charles II and his merciful response to his son's rebellion by comparing it with Henri III's murderous vengeance upon Guise. However, Whiggish contemporaries were inflamed by the play, accusing the dramatists of defaming Monmouth and calling for his execution. Then, as now, the media were harnessed to broadcast, amplify and polarise righteous indignation. A slew of pamphlets and broadsides were printed on the subject, including Thomas Hunt's *A Defence of the Charter, and Municipal Rights of the City of London* (1683), and the anonymous *The True History of the Duke of Guise* (1683) ('Published for the undeceiving such as may perhaps be imposed upon by Mr. Dryden's late Tragedy'), *Sol in Opposition to Saturn, or, A short return to a late tragedy call'd The Duke of Guise* (1683) and *Some Reflections on the Pretended Parallel in the Play Called the Duke of Guise in a Letter to a Friend* (1683). Dryden was pilloried for the apparent attack upon Monmouth, for portraying Charles II as the murderous despot Henri

III and for corrupting the Whiggish Lee with his evil Tory wiles. Dryden acknowledged the controversy in an 'Advertisement' printed at the end of the first quarto of *The Duke of Guise*: 'There was a Preface intended to this Play, in Vindication of it, against two scurrilous Libels lately printed: But it was judg'd, that a Defence of this nature would require more room' (1683, p.76). He then produced *The Vindication: Or the Parallel of the French Holy League, and the English Covenant, Turn'd into a Seditious Libell against the King and his Royal Highness, by Thomas Hunt and the Authors of the Reflections upon the Pretended Parallel in the Play called The Duke of Guise* (1683). In this sixty-page treatise, Dryden argues that the play was a parallel not 'of the *Men*, but of the *Times*, a Parallel of the *Factions* and the *Leaguers*' (p.7).

Dryden's lengthy, and occasionally specious, justification of the play provides useful information about the collaboration between the two dramatists. Then, as now, criticism focused on Dryden's authorship often to the exclusion of Lee ('the Town did ignorantly call and take this to be *my Play*', 1683, p.3). The Whigs attacked Dryden as the play's sole author in a 'tactical move' (Kewes, 1998, p.163) against the Tory party. In retaliation, Dryden states that the play was Lee's brainchild: 'it was at his earnest Desire, without any Solicitation of mine, that this Play was produced betwixt us' (1683, p.3). He identifies Lee as the author of some of the play's most controversial lines and sets out clearly how the work was divided: '*Two thirds* of it belong'd to *him*; and then to *me* only the *First Scene* of the Play; the whole *Fourth Act*, and the *first half*, or somewhat *more* of the *Fifth*' (1683, p.3). Kewes (1998, p.167) notes that Dryden is being somewhat disingenuous here in order to evade the Whigs' accusations of libel and treason; his contribution makes up almost half the play rather than a third (Dearing and Roper (1993, p.480).

It is not known to what extent the printed text of *The Duke of Guise* differs from the version performed in 1682. However, it is clear that at least some lines have been cut or amended to avoid deepening the play's notoriety through the indisputable evidence of print. In *A Defence of the Charter* (1683, p.30), Thomas Hunt objects strongly to the apparent blasphemy uttered in the couplet 'For Conscience, and Heavens fear, Religious rules / They are all State bells to toll in pious fools', which does not appear in the published play. Dryden responds to the criticism initially by dodging the charge: 'In the first place, he is mistaken in his *Man*, for the Verses are not *mine*, but *Mr Lees*' (1683, p.18). His further explanation is that the collaboration between the dramatists was not close and perhaps was undertaken without sharing material, since Dryden claims to be unaware of the contents of Lee's sections of the play: 'I ask'd him concerning [the lines], and have this account, that they were spoken by the *Devil*' (1683, p.18). This suggests that the couplet was spoken by the spirit Melanax, who appears to Guise's advisor Malicorne. The couplet is notable for paraphrasing the lines which close the speech delivered by the Admiral of France at the end of Act II of *The Massacre of Paris*: 'For Conscience, and Heav'ns Fear, Religion's Rules, / They're all State-Bells, to toll in pious Fools' (*Massacre*, II.i.267-8). This is one of many examples of recycled text within Lee's parts of *The Duke of Guise*.

As Van Lennep (1933, pp,542-552) and Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, pp.389-390, 596) have shown, Lee's portion of *The Duke of Guise* reworks a significant amount of text taken from *The Massacre of Paris*, then unstaged since its ban three years earlier. Lee adapts his own work in a manner that Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.390) describe as 'quite ingenious', and which is akin to the twentieth-century cut-up technique popularised by

the writer William S. Burroughs, rearranging the text of the play in order to create a new work. In a letter to the Lord Chamberlain which prefaces *The Princess of Cleve* (1689), pleading for the ban on *The Massacre of Paris* to be lifted, Lee refers to his reuse of the text: 'the Duke of Guise, who was Notorious for a bolder Fault [the controversy described above], has wrested two whole Scenes from the Original, which after the Vacation he will be forc'd to pay [an allusion to Lee's intention to stage *The Massacre of Paris* in its original form in the next theatrical season]'. Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, pp.389-390, 596) observe that Lee reuses somewhat more than 'two whole Scenes'. Table 3.1 shows the extent to which Lee borrows from his earlier play.

Text in *The Duke of Guise*	Source text from *The Massacre of Paris*
I.i.112-119	I.i.183-189
I.i.200-203	I.i.68-71
I.i.352-363	I.i.150-160
II.i.46-106	I.ii.15-19, 25-40, 76-78, 79, 83-96, 108-111, 115, 116-117, 155-156, I.i.123-125
II.i.126-128	IV.i.50-52
II.ii.41-140	IV.ii.63-74, 87-94, 97-100, 105-108, 113-123, 137-148, 168-183, 193-215
II.ii.151-157	IV.ii.244-250
III.i.125-128	III.ii.25-28

Table 3.1: Text in *The Duke of Guise* taken from *The Massacre of Paris*, based on Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.596), with additions by the author.

Approximately 23% of each of Acts I and IV of *The Massacre of Paris* is reused in *The Duke of Guise*; this is approximately 9% of the original play. The reused text makes up 16% of Lee's parts of *The Duke of Guise*, thus the majority of Lee's contribution to the play is original. However, despite this, as Section 3.2 will show, *The Massacre of Paris* dominates Lee's parts of *The Duke of Guise*. Although Van Lennep (1933, p.542-547) and Stroup and Cooke (1955, [1968], Vol.2, pp.389-390, 596) identify most of the lines of text from *The Massacre of Paris* reused in *The Duke of Guise*, no detailed study of Lee's methods in reusing his own work has been made previously. Hence, through close analysis, the rest of this chapter will investigate the ways in which Lee shapes his parts of *The Duke of Guise* into an emotive tragedy by repurposing text from *The Massacre of Paris* and blending it with new material based upon Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France*.

As Kewes (1998, p.162) notes, '[m]odern scholars have rarely been interested in *The Duke of Guise* except as a piece of party propaganda'. Lee's contribution to the play has been examined mainly as a litmus test of his political convictions, but opinion is divided. Brown (1985, p.23) argues that the play shows little change in Lee's beliefs as expressed in *The Massacre of Paris*, and that Lee 'is more a disinterested reporter of the English scene than a propagandist for either side'. Hume (1976a, p.121) asserts that Lee 'performed a remarkable political turnabout' in writing *The Duke of Guise*, transforming from a 'radical who had consistently written against the divine right of kings' into a Tory apologist. However, as evidence for this, Hume cites Lee's 'utiliz[ation of] mob scenes from *The Massacre of Paris*, inverting their meaning so that what had been defended was now besmirched'. There is no mob scene in *The Masssacre of Paris*, hence this suggests that Hume has based his opinion upon a false premise. Canfield (1985, pp.248-250) regards *The Duke of Guise* as a royalist

play which endorses the concept of the divine right of kings. Dammers (1970/1971) makes a brief acknowledgement of Lee's contribution before focusing on Dryden as if he were the sole author, repeatedly misattributing Lee's text to Dryden then using it to draw conclusions about the Poet Laureate's authorial intentions. Barbour (1940, pp.115-116) argues that Lee is 'consistently anti-divine-right and anti-Tory' throughout his career and that *The Duke of Guise* may have been written under Dryden's influence or may simply have indicated that Lee decided 'that a playwright would do well to be prudent in his political utterance' at that time. None of these critics have examined the text of the play in any great depth. As the rest of this chapter will show, close analysis of *The Duke of Guise* suggests that Lee's intentions in writing the play were primarily theatrical rather than political.

3.2 How Lee adapts Davila's *History* and *The Massacre of Paris* to create his parts of *The Duke of Guise*

In writing his parts of *The Duke of Guise*, Lee adapts both Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France* and his own banned play, *The Massacre of Paris*. As Davila (1678, p.372) observes, a parallel exists between the historical events dramatized in both plays. This section will demonstrate that, by introducing fictional elements into the narrative and reusing material from *The Massacre of Paris*, Lee strengthens and expands this parallel so that his parts of *The Duke of Guise* follow the emotional template set by *The Massacre of Paris* while simultaneously dramatizing faithfully the sequence of historical events described by Davila.

In *The Duke of Guise*, Lee returns to the Valois Court of sixteenth-century France, focusing upon events which occurred sixteen years after those dramatized in *The Massacre of Paris*. Once again, his main source is Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France*. In writing

The Duke of Guise, Lee focuses upon minor details in Davila's *History* to create a strong sense of realism, as he did in *The Massacre of Paris* (see Section 2.4). For example, at the climax of the play, the Archbishop of Lyons and the Cardinal of Guise are seized by Colonel Grillon and handed over to one of the guards ('Take 'em Dugast into your Custody', *Guise*, V.iv.30) before the King orders 'Bid Dugast execute the Cardinal.' (*Guise*, V.iv.37). The presence of the minor character of Dugast, a non-speaking part mentioned in neither the stage directions nor the dramatis personae, is a faithful depiction of events described in Davila's *History*:

> [T]he King … resolved to go forward, and to free himself from the Cardinal of *Guise,* a no less fierce and terrible Head of the League than his Brother had been: To which end, having found the Five and forty unwilling to imbrue their hands in the blood of the Cardinal, he commanded *du Gast,* one of the Captains of his Guard, that he should cause him to be put to death the next morning by his Souldiers.

(Davila, 1678, p.372)

Therefore, in *The Duke of Guise* as in *The Massacre of Paris*, this close adherence to his source material in minor details suggests that any deviations which Lee makes from major events described in Davila's *History* are deliberate and serve a dramatic purpose.

Describing the actions of the French King Henri III against his enemy, the Duke of Guise, Davila (1678, p.350) draws attention to the way that history repeats itself:

> [The King] resolved to try all possible ways to ruine [Guise]; but because he thought that of War too difficult and dangerous, nor would his Conscience suffer him to join with the Hugonots, he thought to supply all wants by cunning; and consenting to the Dukes propositions, to draw him at last into some place where he might make an end of him by the same means which he remembred had been used in the reign of his Brother *Charles* the Ninth, against the Admiral *de Coligny* and his Adherents.

(Davila, 1678, p.350)

Lee is able to exploit this and other parallels between the two periods of French history by reusing text from *The Massacre of Paris* in Acts I and II of *The Duke of Guise* to create a narrative arc for the King which is superficially identical to that of his predecessor. In each

play, the King (Charles IX in *The Massacre of Paris* and his younger brother Henri III in *The Duke of Guise*) is portrayed as uncertain initially whether to act against his enemy (the Admiral of France in *The Massacre of Paris*; Guise in *The Duke of Guise*), but is persuaded to do so by the manipulative counsel of the Queen Mother. Consequently, the King (Charles/Henri) dissimulates to entrap his enemy, the Admiral/Guise, and engineers a confrontation between the Admiral/Guise and the King's loyal lieutenant (Guise/Grillon) in order to assuage the Admiral/Guise's suspicions.

To create this narrative, Lee chooses his recycled material judiciously. Historically, Charles IX was attended by the 'very much trusted, and very faithful' Count of Retz, Alberto Gondi, (Davila, 1678, p.171) and Henri III was attended by Colonel Alphonso Corso, 'a most trusty Servant of the Kings' (Davila, 1678, p.338). The serendipitously identical metre of the names of the Kings' confidants allows Lee to transpose lines with minimal alteration:

KING: Alberto Gondi.
ALBERTO: Sir!
KING: I think thou lov'st me.
ALBERTO: More than my Life.
KING: That's much; yet I believe thee.
(*Massacre*, I.ii.15-16)

KING: Alfonso Corso.
ALFONSO: Sir.
KING: I think thou lov'st me.
ALFONSO: More than my Life.
KING: That's much; yet I believe thee.
(*Guise*, II.i.46-47)

In reusing text for the scene in which the King discusses with his attendant his qualms about his mother's advice to suppress his enemy ruthlessly (*Massacre*, I.ii.17-40; *Guise*, II.i.48-66), Lee cuts lines which refer specifically to the plot to assassinate the Admiral ('Thus to destroy the Souldiers of the Kingdom… / 'Tis Barbarous, Alberto', *Massacre*, I.ii.20-23) and revises

the remainder of the text to make his point more explicit, emphasising the difference between the inherent nobility of open military action ('Caesar did ill, but did it in the Sun, / And foremost in the Field', *Guise*, II.i.58-59) and the disgrace of clandestine attack ('sneaking Brutus', *Guise*, II.i.59). Lee also standardises his allusions to Marcus Tullius Cicero for clarity, referring to him as 'Tully' throughout the passage ('This is a Blot, the Ciceronian Stile / Could ne're wipe off… Tully was Wise, but wanted Constancy', *Massacre*, I.ii.36-40; 'This is a Blot which Tully's Eloquence / Could ne're wipe off… Tully was wise, but wanted Constancy', *Guise*, II.i.63-66). This demonstrates that Lee was not merely copying his earlier work but seeking to improve on it where necessary. The resultant passage highlights the parallels between the two kings: initially, both men deplore assassination as an ignoble action, yet they end the plays by engineering the murder of their enemy. Their moral corruption contributes to each play's development as a tragedy. As Harth (1993, p.202) points out, Lee creates dramatic irony with this passage in *The Duke of Guise*. It serves the same function within that play as that of the corresponding text in *The Massacre of Paris*. Hence in transposing the lines from one play to the other, Lee has retained their meaning and purpose within a new but equivalent context, while also revising the text to improve its clarity.

However, in reusing text from *The Massacre of Paris* in *The Duke of Guise*, Lee does not simply transfer speeches between analogous characters. Instead, he selects passages which are the most apt for the situation depicted in the new scenes. In portraying the King in *The Duke of Guise*, he redistributes a speech delivered by a single character in *The Massacre of Paris* among multiple speakers in order to support his characterisation of Henri as a ruler influenced by the counsel of others. This preserves the melody, rhythm and meaning of the words while altering the implications of the speech. Act IV of *The Massacre of Paris* closes

with the Admiral doubting the false assurances of Charles IX and longing to find comfort in the company of his wife:

ADMIRAL: Where's Antramont? but haste, and tell her all;
Tell her th' extravagant kindness of the King,
Tell her, but stay; why such repeated Oaths?
That's to be thought on: Hollow was his aspect,
Graves in his smiles; Death in his bloodless hands.
O, Antramont! I'le haste to meet thy Eyes:
The Face of Beauty on these rising horrours,
Looks like the Midnight-Moon upon a Murder:
It drives the Shades that thicken from the State,
And gilds the dark design that's ripe for Fate.
(*Massacre*, IV.ii.241-250)

In *The Duke of Guise*, Lee uses this passage in a similar context of mistrust at the close of Act II. The rebel Guise departs from Court, promising Henri III that 'still while Life shall last, [I] will take strict care / To justify my Loyalty to your Person' (*Guise*, II.ii.144-145). However, the King, the Queen Mother and Abbot Delbene are not taken in and the endangered King seeks consolation in the company of the woman he loves:

KING: I see even to the bottom of his Soul:
And, Madam, I must say the Guise has Beauties,
But they are set in Night, and foul Design:
He was my Friend when young, and might be still.
ABBOT: Mark'd you his hollow accents at the parting?
QUEEN MOTHER: Graves in his Smiles.
KING: Death in his bloodless Hands.
O Marmoutier! now I will haste to meet thee;
The Face of Beauty, on this rising Horrour,
Looks like the midnight-Moon upon a Murder;
It gilds the dark design that stays for Fate
And drives the Shades that thicken from the State.
(*Guise*, II.ii.147-157)

The Admiral's uncertain misgivings in one play have become the confirmed suspicions of the royal faction in the other. Whereas de Coligny struggles to accept the existence of the conspiracy against him, in *The Duke of Guise* the secret plotting of the title character is discerned by his enemies with ease. By reversing the order of the couplet which closes the

scene, Lee focuses on the themes of the respective plays. *The Massacre of Paris* considers the implications of predestination and the role which the Admiral's Calvinist belief plays in his downfall. Accordingly, the final line of Act IV focuses on 'Fate' (*Massacre*, IV.ii.250). *The Duke of Guise* is concerned primarily with politics, thus the final line of Act II focuses on 'the State' (*Guise*, II.ii.157). Hence, in transferring passages from *The Massacre of Paris* to *The Duke of Guise*, Lee tailors the text carefully not only to fit the new historical narrative but also to create a new underlying meaning.

By thus reusing material from *The Massacre of Paris* in Acts I and II of *The Duke of Guise*, Lee portrays Henri III in a way that is very similar to his depiction of Charles IX, a King surrounded by advisors who advocate the death of his enemy. Lee writes original text for the later acts of *The Duke of Guise*, but the historical parallels ensure that the play continues to follow the narrative arc set out in *The Massacre of Paris*. The only significant difference between the Kings' stories in the two plays is in the outcome: Charles is horrified to the point of derangement by the murder he has sanctioned (see Section 2.3 above) but Henri justifies his actions and consolidates his power, as Davila describes:

> [The King] first asked [the Queen Mother] how she did; to which she having answered, that she felt her self something better, he replied, And I also now find my self much better; for this morning I have made my self King of *France,* having put to death the King of *Paris.*

(Davila, 1678, p.371)

KING: O, Madam[…], how goes your health?
QUEEN MOTHER: A little mended, Sir, what have you done?
KING: That which has made me King of France, for there
The King of Paris at your Feet lies dead.

(*Guise*, V.iv.40-43)

Thus, until the final scenes of the plays, the characters of the Kings in *The Massacre of Paris* and *The Duke of Guise* follows similar trajectories despite portraying historically different

monarchs, emphasising the parallels between their reigns as recorded in Davila's *History*. These parallels contribute to the general similarity of the plots of *The Massacre of Paris* and *The Duke of Guise*, two plays in which a King of France uses subterfuge to put down rebellion and protect his crown.

In shaping Henri III's character with material from *The Massacre of Paris* to create a figure similar to Charles IX, Lee departs radically from his source material. Davila (1678, p.332) condemns Henri as a monarch whose 'own profane manner of spending, daily increased, had lost the hearts of the people' and whose 'obstinate favour to his Minions, had alienated the minds of his most ancient, most devoted Servants'. This may have seemed uncomfortably near the knuckle to a dramatist observing the louche court of Charles II. Having had two plays, *The Massacre of Paris* and *Lucius Junius Brutus* (1681), fall foul of the Lord Chamberlain in recent years, Lee would not have wanted to risk offending Charles II with a critical portrayal of a king. Thus, while *The Duke of Guise* follows the historical actions of Henri III as described by Davila's *History*, Lee diverges from his source with a fictionalised characterisation of an essentially honourable King which is bolstered by the play's apparent realism. The King is portrayed as a fundamentally noble and gentle ruler who must be persuaded by his allies to take forceful action again his enemies ('Doubt not your Friends; / Love 'em, and then you need not fear your Foes', *Guise*, II.i.106-107). The Queen Mother describes the 'Natural Sweetness of [her son's] Temper' (*Guise*, II.i.37) and fears that his 'dangerous Mercy' (*Guise*, II.i.38) towards Guise endangers his life. Her words and hence the characterisation of the King are given credibility by Lee's close adherence to Davila's *History* in the Queen Mother's speeches elsewhere in the play. Davila's detailed description

of the Holy League's plot to seize the King is distilled into a concise speech which emphasises the threat posed by the League to those in power:

> [The Holy League] resolved unanimously to make use of the occasion which the time of *Lent* would afford them, to take his person then when with the Duke of *Espernon* he should be in procession as he was wont, in the habit of a Penitent among the whipping Friars, neither accompanied by his Guards, nor the ordinary retinue of the Court; and as soon as he should be seized upon, under colour of a popular Sedition, caused by the indignation of the common people, exasperated by the heavy punishments that lay upon them… that he should be shut up in a Monastery with strong Guards; after which the Duke of *Aumale*'s five hundred Horse and his other Forces should presently come in, to take absolute possession of the principal places, and keep them guarded till the Duke of *Guise* should arrive; who calling the States General, and shewing either the Kings incapacity, or his evil intentions, and evil Government, might cause the affairs of the Kingdom to be disposed at the arbitrement and to satisfaction of the League.

(Davila, 1678, p.334)

QUEEN MOTHER: Know then, it is resolv'd to seize the King,
When next he goes in Penitential Weeds,
Among the Friars, without his usual Guards;
Then, under shew of Popular Sedition,
For Safety, shut him in a Monastery,
And sacrifice his Favourites to their Rage.

(*Guise*, II.i.14-19)

In his attempts to create a sense of realism through the Queen Mother's speeches, Lee even quotes a proverb in her native Italian verbatim and incorporates into the text Davila's marginal note giving the translation:

> [T]he Queen at last spake this conceit in the Italian Tongue, **Bisogna coprisi bene il viso inanzi che stuzzicare il vespaio:* adding, that it was necessary to arm and provide first, and then means would not be wanting to suppress the Conspirators.
> * He that will stir up a Wasps nest, had first need to cover his face well. A saying of the Queen-Mother.

(Davila, 1678, p.335)

QUEEN MOTHER: You know th' Italian proverb, Bisogna Copriersi:
He that will venture on a Hornets Nest,
Should Arm his Head, and Buckler well his Breast.'

(*Guise*, II.i.29-31)

Lee renders the translation into strongly martial language, interpreting protective cover as military armour, in order to present the Queen Mother as warlike and aggressive. This

supports his portrayal of the King as an essentially peaceful man whose decision to take arms against his enemy is influenced by the counsel of his notorious mother, Catherine de Medici. The positive depiction of the King is also strengthened throughout the play by the awestruck admiration of his supporters. Henri is presented as elevated far above common mortals because of his royal status (‘The Thoughts of such as you, are Starts Divine’, *Guise*, II.i.113 [see also *Massacre*, V.ii.17]; ‘You’ve all the Graces that can Crown Mankind: / … / As if Heaven lent you to the World to Pattern’, *Guise*, III.i.250-253). In a compliment to Charles II, the religious register used by the court beauty Marmoutier to address the King endorses the concept of the divine right to rule, while also alluding to the English monarch’s famous allure to women:

MARMOUTIER: … let the Misery invade my Sex,
That cou’d not for the Royal Cause like me,
Throw all their Luxury before your Feet,
And follow you like Pilgrims through the World.
(*Guise*, III.i.267-270)

Hence Lee presents a sanitised portrayal of Henri III as a model ruler forced to take violent action by the intolerable provocation of the upstart Guise. This depiction is at odds with Davila’s description of a ‘melancholy, distrustful’ (1678, p.349) king skilled in ‘dissimulation’ (1678, p.332) who was considered ‘odious and contemptible’ (1678, p.332) by his subjects. Thus, in creating the character of the King, Lee blends material from Davila’s *History* and *The Massacre of Paris* to provide a dramatic counterpoint to the ambitious would-be usurper Guise while also avoiding the risk of offending the English Crown at a time when Charles II had consolidated his power over the Whigs.

Having strengthened the parallels between *The Massacre of Paris* and *The Duke of Guise* by tailoring the characterisation of Henri III to be closer to his representation of Charles IX than

that of Davila, Lee takes a similar approach to the characterisation of Guise in *The Duke of Guise*. In doing so, he departs from Davila's *History* in order to imbue Guise's narrative arc with elements of the storyline of the Admiral of France in *The Massacre of Paris*. The character of Guise is prominent in both *The Massacre of Paris* and *The Duke of Guise*; the first play dramatizes his rise and the second his fall. In both plays, he is demonstrably the same ruthless politician willing to sacrifice love for power ('I love, 'tis true; but most for my Ambition', *Massacre*, I.i.94; 'A Soul so flush'd as mine is with Ambition, / Sagacious and so nice, must have disdain'd her', *Guise*, I.i.214-215), indicating continuity between the works. In *The Massacre of Paris*, he functions dramatically as the Admiral's mirror image: both men are proud and ambitious yet their aims and beliefs are completely opposed, and Guise ends that play triumphant after orchestrating de Coligny's assassination. (Hughes [1996, p.358] observes that 'so often in Lee, the innocent die and the wicked remain unpunished', yet in *The Massacre of Paris* this is simply a reflection of history.) However, in *The Duke of Guise*, Guise's narrative arc is conflated with that of the Admiral while still following the historical order of events described by Davila. At the beginning of the play, like de Coligny, Guise is a beloved leader feted by his followers: '[They] stile you the New David, Second Moses, / Prop of the Church, Deliverer of the People' (*Guise*, I.i.281-282);

> On the other side, all the Streets, and every corner of *Paris,* resounded the praises of the Duke of *Guise,* celebrated in Verse and Prose by a thousand Writers, with the Title of the *new David,* the *second Moses,* the *Deliverer of the Catholick People,* the *Prop and Pillar of the Holy Church*.

(Davila, 1678, pp.332-333)

However, again like the Admiral, Guise's 'vain-glory and ambition' (Davila, 1678, p.373) bring about his downfall and, having been lured from a place of safety, he is murdered in cold blood on the orders of the King: 'The Guise is assaulted by Eight, They stab him in all parts, but most in the head.' (*Guise*, s.d., V.iv.32);

> The Duke… entered into the Ante-chamber, which presently being locked after him, he saw not that store of company which was wont to be there, but only those eight Gentlemen of the Kings Guard, which were well known to him… St. *Malin,* one of the eight, stabbed him into the neck with a Dagger, and the rest presently fell upon him on every side… after many wounds given him in the head, and all the other parts of his body… he breathed forth the last groans of his life.

(Davila, 1678, p.370)

Hence, in *The Duke of Guise*, the historical parallels with events dramatized in *The Massacre of Paris* allow Lee to substitute Guise for the Admiral as the tragic protagonist in a theatrical portrayal of the ruin of a gifted but flawed man whose talents are outweighed by his ambition and hubris.

However, the characterisation of Guise is fictionalised to a much greater extent in *The Duke of Guise* than either that of the Admiral or the Guise of *The Massacre of Paris*. While Dryden's parts of *The Duke of Guise* emphasise Guise's ambition for the throne as part of the dramatist's attack on Monmouth and the Whig faction ('The Court… Are all as much within my power, as if / I grip'd 'em in my Fist', *Guise*, IV.ii.395-396; 'The Genius of the King bends under mine', *Guise*, IV.ii.106), in his sections Lee alters Guise's main motivation, diluting the play's contemporary political implications. Lee's Guise is driven by sexual jealousy ('this galling Passion', *Guise*, I.i.346) and the thirst for revenge against the King after his mistress Marmoutier leaves him for the Court of the besotted monarch when Guise refuses to renounce his 'black Ambition' (*Guise*, I.i.277) to rule France. This fictional characterisation shifts the play away from close adherence to Davila's *History* while moving it closer to the tragic narrative arc of *The Massacre of Paris*. The doomed protagonist Guise is set on an inevitable trajectory towards the set piece emotional parting from his lover Marmoutier and execution in the play's final scenes, echoing the Admiral's inexorable downfall, his moving farewell to his wife Antramont (*Massacre*, V.ii.15-64) and his

subsequent murder (*Massacre*, V.iv). Since, as before, Lee's scrupulous accuracy in tiny details implies that any divergence from Davila in the play is significant, this drastic change in Guise's motivation from politics to love suggests that Lee's primary intention in writing *The Duke of Guise* was to recreate the emotive tragedy of *The Massacre of Paris*.

In order to bring Guise's narrative arc in *The Duke of Guise* in line with that of the Admiral in *The Massacre of Paris*, Lee introduces a fictional subplot which depicts Guise's relationship with the virginal courtier Marmoutier. Unlike Guise and the King, the character of Marmoutier is entirely fictional. She is created by Lee as Guise's mistress to replicate the emotional dramatic function fulfilled by Marguerite in *The Massacre of Paris*. (It is probable that Marmoutier was also designed to meet the needs of the United Company by providing a leading role for Elizabeth Barry because there was no suitable significant female figure described in Davila's *History*.) Lee takes his heroine's name from the single reference in Davila's *History* to Guise's mistress, 'Madam *de Marmoutier,* whom he extreamly loved' (Davila, 1678, p.370), and places her at the heart of a love triangle between Guise and the King. All the scenes in *The Duke of Guise* which feature Marmoutier are textually original, with no borrowing from *The Massacre of Paris*. It is likely that this is because Lee had already reused material from his earlier play which featured Marguerite in his 1681 comedy *The Princess of Cleve* (see Chapter 4). However, although the content of Marmoutier's scenes is original, the narrative arc of them is not. Once again, Lee follows the template laid down by *The Massacre of Paris*. Like Marguerite, Marmoutier is introduced as Guise's love interest, although, unlike the 'fall'n Angel' Marguerite (*Massacre*, I.i.22), she is idealised by him as the acme of womanhood: 'she's the Character of Heaven… / She dazles, walks meer Angel upon Earth' (*Guise*, I.i.232-234). This virtue reflects well on Marmoutier's other

suitor, the King, and offers the audience the tantalising possibility that Guise might be turned from his destructive course and redeemed, creating suspense. As the climax of each play approaches, both Marguerite and Marmoutier are alienated by Guise's destructive ambition ('Follow the bloody bark of thy Ambition, / And never see me more', *Massacre*, V.i.156; 'Why came that Sign uncall'd? For Love of me / Partly perhaps, but more for thirst of Glory', *Guise*, V.ii.176-177), yet love him still ('You have broke my heart a thousand several ways, / And now against my will this parting melts me', *Massacre*, V.i.186-187; 'I have sworn you must not [see me more]: / Which Thought thus roots me here, melts my Resolves', *Guise*, V.ii.268-269). Despite declaring his constancy ('eternal Love shall crown thee', *Massacre*, V.i.194; 'I love you still, / Love you, O Heav'n, ev'n in my own despight', *Guise*, V.ii.180-181), in poetic justice for his ambition, Guise is renounced by both his lovers in ways which influence his fate. In *The Massacre of Paris*, Marguerite chooses loyalty to the virtuous husband she does not love ('save Navarre, and never see me more', *Massacre*, V.i.208). Guise's fury at her loss hardens his heart ('if thy feeble Soul to Love return, / Do not, like Anthony, for life time burn' (*Massacre*, V.i.211-212) and spurs his revenge against the Admiral: 'having quench'd thy fires with Beauties Charms, / Forget the Pleasures, and rush to Arms' (*Massacre*, V.i.217-218). By contrast, in *The Duke of Guise*, Marmoutier enters a convent 'to clear / Th' imputed stains of [her] suspected Honour' (*Guise*, V.i.242-243). Losing his 'earthly Saint' (*Guise*, V.ii.245) brings about Guise's downfall by weakening him at his moment of greatest danger ('My Salt, my Mettal, and my Spirits gone', *Guise*, V.ii.284). At this point, Lee weaves his invented romantic subplot together with the single reference to the real Marmoutier in Davila's *History*. In passing, Davila describes a spell of faintness experienced by Guise shortly before his murder:

> In the mean time the Duke being come into the Council, and set near the fire, fell into a little swoon, whether it were that he remembred himself of the danger in which he

> was, being separated from all his dependents; or that Nature (as it often happens) presaging his future misfortune, did of her self give that shew of resentment; or whether (as his ill-willers said) it was because he had weakened himself too much that night with Madam *de Marmoutier,* whom he extreamly loved.

(Davila, 1678, p.370)

Lee reframes this incident romantically by making Guise severely physically affected by the loss of his love, building the play's emotional intensity as its climax approaches:

GUISE: O Marmoutier, Ha never see thee more,
Peace my tumultuous heart, why jolt my spirits
In this unequal Circling of my Blood,
I'le stand it while I may, O Mighty Nature!
Why this Alarm, why dost thou call me on
To fight, yet rob my Limbs of all their use. [*Swoons.*

(*Guise*, V.iv.4-9)

However, although Lee elevates the cause of Guise's swoon emotionally and dramatically by attributing it to thwarted romantic passion, he immediately undermines this by reframing the gossip of Davila's 'ill-willers' in an earthy, cynical rhyming couplet which punctures the lofty, heroic register established by Guise's previous speech:

GUISE: I beg your Pardons, Vapours no more.
GRILLON: Th' Effect
Of last Nights Lechery with some working Whore.

(*Guise*, V.iv.10-11)

In this brief speech, Lee identifies the King's guard Colonel Grillon with Guise's 'ill-willers', thus adhering to the spirit of Davila's account of their antagonistic relationship (see Section 3.3). At the same time, Lee embroiders history by putting Grillon in the dramatically ironic position of unknowingly applying to his chaste niece Marmoutier, the fictional cause of the historical swoon, the rumour of dishonour which has condemned her to a nunnery. Hence, in this typically complex and contradictory way, Lee brings together all the threads of the fictional subplot which mimics the emotional pattern of *The Massacre of Paris* before resuming his close adherence to Davila's *History* as *The Duke of Guise* concludes with the murder of Guise and consolidation of the King's power. Thus although Lee writes new

material for all the scenes featuring Marmoutier, she is not created as a character in her own right. Instead, she exists purely as a narrative device, the mechanism which converts Guise from the ambitious politician of history to the doomed lover of romantic tragedy. Lee uses Marmoutier to ensure that *The Duke of Guise* functions as a tragedy following the pattern set by *The Massacre of Paris*. Yet, despite this, Marmoutier is not integral to *The Duke of Guise* in the way that Marguerite is integral to *The Massacre of Paris*. While Marguerite's marriage to Navarre and her relationship with Guise drive the plot of the earlier play, Marmoutier's relationships with Guise, Grillon and the King merely inject artificial melodrama into an historical political narrative.

Compared to Marguerite, whose portrayal in *The Massacre of Paris* is based upon her depiction in Davila's *History*, the characterisation of Marmoutier in *The Duke of Guise* is weak. She shifts so abruptly from posing as a vain, worldly flirt ('Mend me this Curle', *Guise*, II.ii.11) to appearing as a chaste maiden that Lee requires her to signal this true aspect of her persona explicitly to the audience as she prepares to petition Henri to spare Guise's life: 'O Heavens! did ever Virgin yet attempt / An Enterprise like mine?' (*Guise*, III.i.167-168). The apparent carelessness with which Lee constructs the character of Marmoutier is demonstrated further by the oddly ill-defined nature of her relationship with Grillon. She is introduced as his 'Neece' (*Guise*, I.i.210) but sometimes addresses him as 'Father' (*Guise*, III.i.198) or even, melodramatically, as 'Father, Uncle, Brother, all the Kin, / The precious Blood that's left me in the World' (*Guise*, III.i.341). It is explained that Grillon saved her from 'the bold Ruffian in the Massacre' (*Guise*, III.i.181) who 'would have stain'd [her] almost Infant Honour, / With Lust, and Blood' (*Guise*, III.i.182-183). However, this lurid revelation has no relevance to the plot, even with its reference to the slaughter of the

Huguenots which Lee dramatized previously in *The Massacre of Paris*. Instead, it serves only to feminise the 'blunt, hot, honest, downright, valiant' (*Guise*, I.i.208) Grillon with an uncharacteristically histrionic speech, peppered with ostentatious alliteration, intended simply to move the audience with meretricious emotion:

GRILLON: But oh that thou hadst dy'd
Ten thousand Deaths, e're blasted Grillon's Glory,
Grillon that sav'd thee from a barbarous World,
Where thou hadst starv'd, or sold thy self for Bread,
Took thee into his Bosom, foster'd thee
As his own Soul, and lap'd thee in his Heart-strings.
(*Guise*, III.i.188-193)

The lack of true dramatic meaning in this scene emphasises the hollow artificiality of Marmoutier's persona in comparison with that of the factually-based Marguerite, and that of Grillon, another character built up by Lee from brief references in Davila's *History*. As Stern (2021a) notes, the weakness of character in *The Duke of Guise* and the extent to which speeches from *The Massacre of Paris* are redistributed within the play indicate that Lee prioritises producing verbal and theatrical effect over creating characters with distinctive and coherent poetic voices. However, this is a deliberate artistic choice. Lee's tragedies have their origins in the theatrical traditions of earlier ages. He admired John Fletcher and 'the immortal Shakespear' (*Mithridates*, 1678, dedicatory epistle, l.64) and 'endeavour'd to be like 'em' (*Mithridates*, 1678, dedicatory epistle, ll.53-54). Like Lee, 'Fletcher has… been reproached with skin-deep, inconsistent characterization, and sensational plotting' (Parsons, 1972, p.39). Parsons (1972, p.28) asserts that Restoration melodrama has its roots in Fletcher's plays and in the masques of the Jacobean and Caroline courts 'where character is nothing and sensuous demonstration everything' and in which '[c]oncepts of depth, of a compelling inner life, are irrelevant to character conceived not as individual personality but as illustrated moral trait' (Parsons, 1972, p.23). Slaney (2013, p.53) argues that, throughout his

career, Lee experiments with 'visceral language that renders extreme sensation palpable to its auditors' in a manner similar to the exaggerated 'hypertragedy' of Seneca. It is the evocation of this sensation rather than particular 'moral traits' that Lee prioritises over creating characters with unique poetic voices: the emotional force of the words spoken matters more than their meaning. Hence, the extravagant language of Lee's plays is engineered precisely to evoke strong feelings in the audience by overwhelming them with auditory sensation. This is coupled with the judiciously timed use of visual spectacle in set pieces such as the assassination of the Admiral in *The Massacre of Paris* or of Guise in *The Duke of Guise*. The resultant carefully regulated ebb and flow of emotion throughout each play forms a 'quasi-musical arrangement' (Slaney, 2013, p.69). In his parts of *The Duke of Guise*, Lee attempts to replicate the narrative arcs of the main characters of *The Massacre of Paris* and thus reproduce the resultant emotional orchestration of the earlier play. Since, in Lee's plays, the meaning of a speech matters less than the emotion it conveys, the speech and its associated emotion can be transposed from one context to another. This allows Lee to reuse text from *The Massacre of Paris* in *The Duke of Guise* while still following the historical narrative dictated by Davila's *History*. For the parts of *The Duke of Guise* for which there is no material suitable for reuse, Lee writes new scenes which advance the plot of *The Duke of Guise* while mimicking the emotional orchestration of *The Massacre of Paris*. Hence the inconsistent characterisation of Marmoutier and Grillon in *The Duke of Guise*, III.i, arises not from sloppy writing but from the need to create an emotional peak at that point in the play.

Collectively, the evidence presented in this section suggests strongly that Lee designed *The Duke of Guise* to recreate the carefully orchestrated tragedy of *The Massacre of Paris*. By adapting Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France* more freely than in *The Massacre*

of Paris, Lee is able to force *The Duke of Guise* to follow the dramatic trajectory and emotional orchestration of *The Massacre of Paris* while still retaining the historical narrative of his source material. In doing so, not only does Lee emphasise the way that history repeats itself, but also he seeks to evoke an emotional response from the audience similar to that intended to be created by *The Massacre of Paris*. At the time of writing *The Duke of Guise*, the ban upon *The Massacre of Paris* was still in force. Therefore, it is likely that Lee conceived his parts of *The Duke of Guise* as a vehicle to repackage *The Massacre of Paris* in a form which would be approved for performance by the Lord Chamberlain and so finally bring his finely calibrated emotive history play to the stage.

3.3 *The Duke of Guise* and Lee's politics

As discussed in Section 3.1, some critics consider that *The Duke of Guise* indicates that the Exclusion Crisis led Lee to change his political allegiance from Whig to Tory. This section will consider evidence for Lee's intentions both in reusing text from *The Massacre of Paris* in the early acts of the play and in creating new material for the later acts. These intentions will be compared with those of the staunchly Tory Dryden in order to determine whether *The Duke of Guise* can be considered a true indication of Lee's political beliefs.

In *The Duke of Guise*, II.ii, the set piece confrontation between Guise and Colonel Grillon reuses text from a similar exchange between the Admiral of France and Guise in *The Massacre of Paris*, IV.ii. In *The Massacre of Paris*, the quarrel between the Admiral and Guise is set up to dupe the Admiral into believing he has the King's backing. In *The Duke of Guise*, the aim of the argument, as stated by the Queen Mother, is to 'let Guise know, we are not in the Dark' (*Guise,* II.i.136) about the Holy League's plot against the King. Lee gives

Guise's lines in the earlier play to Grillon in the latter, while Guise now becomes the mouthpiece for de Coligny's speeches. As Kewes (1998, p.169) notes, this changes the meaning of the words considerably: '[t]he sinister provocation of the Admiral by the Duke of Guise turns into an expression of righteous indignation at Guise's treachery when transferred to the upright Grillon, while the Admiral's profession of his patriotic aims is thoroughly subverted by its re-ascription to Guise'. Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.390) argue that 'the situations in the plot have been completely reversed, just as Lee's politics have been'. However, although the text is 'invert[ed]' by 'transferr[ing] a number of speeches from villains to heroes and vice versa' (Kewes, 1996, p.169), Lee is concerned less with the political meaning of the speeches than with how well they dramatize the historical relationship between the characters. Davila describes the animosity which existed between Guise and Grillon:

> Monsieur *de Grillon* Colonel of the Guards was there present, who being a free Souldierly Man, and no very good Friend to the Duke of *Guise*, whilst he bowed courteously to every private Souldier, made very small shew of respect to the Duke.

(Davila, 1678, p.338)

The redistributed text dramatizes this enmity, developing both character and narrative. Guise's single-minded ambition is consistent across both plays, and is conveyed as he echoes the hubris of the Admiral's lofty words:

ADMIRAL: Know, I intend the Greatness of the King,
The Greatness of all France, whom it imports
To make their Arms their Aim and Occupation.
(*Massacre*, IV.ii.91-93)

GUISE: Sir, I intend the Greatness of the King,
The Greatness of all France, whom it imports
To make their Arms their Business, Aim and Glory.
(*Guise*, II.ii.60-62)

The straightforward soldier Grillon is given lines spoken by Guise in *The Massacre of Paris*, IV.ii.97-100, which are concerned with the practicalities of military action, substituting 'the fierce Navarre' for 'a Veteran Army' (*Massacre*, IV.ii.100) to fit the new historical narrative:

GRILLON: Stor'd Arsenals and Armories, Fields of Horse,
Ordnance, Munition, and the Nerve of War,
Sound Infantry, not Harrass'd and Diseas'd,
To meet the fierce Navarre, should first be thought on.
(*Guise*, II.ii.65-68)

As Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.4) note, these lines, like others in this scene, are drawn from Francis Bacon's essay 'Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates': 'stored arsenals and armouries, goodly races of horse… ordinance, artillery, and the like' (1612 [1985], p.148); 'the infantry… is the nerve of an army' (1612 [1985], p.149). Although his use of Bacon could indicate that Lee held Whiggish political views at the time of writing *The Massacre of Paris*, it is more likely to be an example of his self-confessed habit of borrowing apt material from Early Modern writers he admires (*Mithridates*, 1678, dedicatory epistle, ll.60-70) rather than evidence that, when writing *The Duke of Guise*, Lee's political views were transposed as neatly as his dialogue. Lee's main intention in reusing this scene is not to signal a change in his politics; at that time, *The Massacre of Paris* had never reached the stage and so its content was unknown to anyone but Lee. Instead, as discussed in Section 3.2, Lee reworks his original text to give the protagonist of *The Duke of Guise* the same narrative arc as the tragic hero of *The Massacre of Paris* in order to recreate the emotional orchestration of the earlier play. By reproducing the quarrel almost verbatim, Lee ensures that, in *The Duke of Guise*, Guise follows the trajectory of the Admiral in *The Massacre of Paris* precisely. Thus any political meaning in the scene has become subordinate to the requirements of structure and evoked emotion.

Similarly, little of the new material written for Lee's sections of *The Duke of Guise* is strongly political. Lee's most pointed references to contemporary events occur in the scene in which Grillon confronts the Parisian mob. The allusion to 'packing Juries' (*Guise*, III.i.57) refers to the selection by the Whiggish City of London of the jurors who acquitted Shaftesbury of treason in 1681, while 'Who Carv'd our Henry's Image on a Table / At your Club-Feast, and after stabb'd it though?' (*Guise*, III.i.84-85) recalls the defacing of a portrait of the Duke of York at the Guildhall in 1682 (Bachorik, 1973, p.210). These topical images of civil unrest add a satirical note to Act III, but do not divert it from representing Davila's account of Guise's entry into Paris faithfully: '[Guise] had above thirty thousand persons about him' (Davila, 1678, p.337); 'the Queen-Mother came and brought the Duke of *Guise:* she was brought her self in a Sedan, the Duke going by her all the way on foot, but with so great a train, and such a confluence of people, that the whole City seemed to be crowded into the Court of the *Louvre* and the Streets thereabouts' (Davila, 1678, p.338); '[The Queen Mother] has tak'n Chair, and [Guise] walks bowing by her, / With thirty thousand Rebels at his heels' (*Guise*, III.ii.12-13). Throughout the play, Lee's significant departures from Davila's *History* do not comment explicitly upon the Exclusion Crisis and its aftermath. Instead, as shown above, consistently, Lee prioritises recreating the dramatic style and emotional narrative of *The Massacre of Paris* in his parts of the play. By contrast, as Kewes (1998, pp.172-173) observes, Dryden makes 'substantial deviations' from Davila's *History* which indicate that 'artistic considerations have been subordinated to a political agenda' as he attacks the Whigs. This markedly different approach to adapting their source material suggests that Lee and Dryden had conflicting authorial intentions for the play which they failed to reconcile. Lee sought to produce an ersatz Early Modern tragedy which would recreate the emotional impact of *The Massacre of Paris*; Dryden sought to settle political scores. Dryden's domination of

the paratext of *The Duke of Guise* (Kewes, 1998, p.166) and the play's persistent reputation as a work of Tory propaganda indicate strongly that Dryden's intentions prevailed.

Thus, although *The Duke of Guise* was undoubtedly written in response to the aftermath of the Exclusion Crisis and was conceived as a political work by Dryden, the considerable effort expended by Lee in reconstructing the tragic tone, structure and emotional orchestration of *The Massacre of Paris* suggests that any political intentions Lee had in writing *The Duke of Guise* were secondary to his desire to bring his earlier work to the stage in a revised form.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that Lee goes to considerable lengths to ensure that his parts of *The Duke of Guise* emulate his banned tragedy *The Massacre of Paris*, not only reusing a significant amount of text but also subordinating the historical political motivation of the real Duke of Guise to a fictional love triangle in order to mimic the emotional orchestration of his earlier play. In this he succeeds to such an extent that it is unsurprising that later references to performances of '*The Duke of Guise*' in 1716 refer in fact to a revival of *The Massacre of Paris* (Stroup and Cooke, 1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.389). While it is possible that this confusion arose because the character of Guise features prominently in both plays, it is more likely that the similarities that Lee built into the work caused eighteenth-century theatregoers to assume that *The Massacre of Paris* and *The Duke of Guise* were alternative titles of the same play. Kewes (1998, p.170) remarks that 'Lee's extensive rewriting of *The Massacre of Paris* shows how unstable and contingent the political import of dramatic texts can be.' This also applies to the narrative and emotional sense of dramatic works. Lee's complex adaptation of verbatim passages from Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France* in *The Massacre of*

Paris (see Section 2.4) demonstrates that he considers textual meaning to be essentially fluid. This is shown once again throughout *The Duke of Guise* in Lee's ongoing creative dialogue with his own, self-created, source text, conducted in tandem with further adaptation of Davila's *History*.

It is probable that Lee regarded *The Duke of Guise* as a sequel to *The Massacre of Paris*, albeit one that cannibalises its predecessor extensively. In an example of Lee's characteristic use of minute historical detail to create realism, the play refers explicitly to events dramatized in the earlier work as the King lists his grievances against his former ally:

KING: Know then I hate aspiring Guise to Death,
Whor'd Marguerite, Plots upon my life,
And shall I not Revenge?
(*Guise*, II.i.92-94)

Not only has Guise threatened the King's life by the actions presented on stage in *The Duke of Guise*, he also brought dishonour upon the royal family previously by entering into a clandestine engagement with Marguerite of Valois, as related in *The Massacre of Paris*. However, since *The Massacre of Paris* had been banned three years before *The Duke of Guise* reached the stage, the reference to Guise's sexual relationship with the King's sister would have been obscure to those in the audience unfamiliar with footnotes of French history. Thus, while of little help to the audience's understanding of the play, the inclusion of the phrase 'whor'd Marguerite' in *The Duke of Guise* implies that Lee perceives the work to be intrinsically linked to *The Massacre of Paris*. His decision not to expand on this brief reference to the content of his earlier play or to cut it perhaps suggests that he forgot that the audience would not share this knowledge. The cryptic nature of Lee's allusion to Guise's past has proved problematic to modern scholars. The editors of the University of California edition of Dryden's collected works omit the pivotal comma in line 93 so that, instead of

summarising the King's reasons for seeking vengeance upon Guise, the line reads as Henri's fear of an attack from a character who does not even appear in the play: 'Whor'd Marguerite plots upon my life' (Dearing and Roper, 1993, p.232). Thus an awareness of the connections which exist between *The Massacre of Paris* and *The Duke of Guise* is essential to understanding Lee and Dryden's play fully.

Although Lee's parts of *The Duke of Guise* replicate *The Massacre of Paris* in many ways, the copy lacks the dramatic impact of the original. The emotional orchestration of *The Massacre of Paris* is tightly controlled, as Lee alternates periods of suspense generated by the political manoeuvring and mutual suspicions of the Protestant and Catholic factions with periods of strong emotion arising from the reactions of the characters to their situations. The emotional incidents become more intense and more frequent as the play approaches its climax. By comparison, *The Duke of Guise* lacks dramatic power. Partly, this is because Lee's deliberate arrangement of tension and emotion building inexorably towards catastrophe is disrupted by Dryden's scenes, which emphasise contemporary political comment over historical accuracy. It is also diluted further by Lee's decision to treat Grillon's confrontation with the rebellious sheriffs in III.i as satirical comedy (see Section 3.3), thus defusing the tension built up in the first half of the play. Hence the overtly political content of the play detracts from the power of its tragedy compared to *The Massacre of Paris*. However, the most significant factor in causing *The Duke of Guise* to be the lesser of the two works is the imposition of the emotional orchestration of Lee's earlier play. In *The Massacre of Paris*, the tension and emotion arise from the situations in which the characters find themselves, and are compounded by the play's strong grounding in history, which encourages the empathy of the audience. By contrast, in *The Duke of Guise*, to a large extent, the characters and situations in

Lee's parts of the play are created to express the emotion required to fit the template laid down by *The Massacre of Paris*. As a result, the characters seem like ciphers and much of the action feels flat and contrived, particularly the love triangle subplot built around the fictional Marmoutier. As a result, the play lacks the integrity of its predecessor. *The Duke of Guise* may recreate much of *The Massacre of Paris* but it cannot emulate its emotional power.

4. *THE PRINCESS OF CLEVE*

4.1 Introduction

Although the most extensive reworking of *The Massacre of Paris* occurs in *The Duke of Guise*, Lee reused other material from his banned play prior to this, in the bawdy comedy *The Princess of Cleve*:

> This Play, when it was Acted, in the Character of the Princess of Jainville, had a resemblance of Marguerite in the Massacre of Paris, Sister to Charles the Ninth, and Wife to Henry the Fourth King of Navar: That fatal Marriage which cost the Blood of so many Thousand Men, and the Lives of the best Commanders.

(*Cleve*, dedicatory epistle, ll.1-5)

The play was performed c.1680 but was not printed until 1689, following Lee's release from Bedlam. The printed text differs from the original manuscript, which is no longer extant, by omitting material relevant to the character Marguerite of Jainville's 'resemblance' to Marguerite of Valois in *The Massacre of Paris*: 'What was borrowed in the Action is left out in the Print, and quite obliterated in the minds of Men' (*Cleve*, dedicatory epistle, ll.5-6). Lee's reuse of text from *The Massacre of Paris* in *The Princess of Cleve* has attracted little critical attention. Van Lennep (1933, pp.393-398), Hume (1976a, p.127, n.16) and Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968]), Vol.2, pp.172, 588) speculate in general terms on where Lee may have inserted material from *The Massacre of Paris*, but no detailed study has been made of the ways in which the adaptation could have been accomplished. This chapter will, for the first time, examine the 1689 first quarto (Q1) of the play in detail to determine how material relating to Marguerite in *The Massacre of Paris* may have been incorporated into *The Princess of Cleve* and for what purpose. The rest of this section will discuss the context and textual history of the play, highlighting the incongruity of Lee's reuse of his tragedy in this work. Section 4.2 will use close analysis of both *The Massacre of Paris* and *The Princess of*

Cleve to determine how Lee is likely to have reused old material in his new play. The knowledge gained in Chapters 2 and 3 of Lee's approach to adapting both source material and his own work will be applied in order to suggest what the non-extant 1680 performance text may have contained. Section 4.3 will reflect on the findings of the chapter.

Lee's primary source for the play is Madame de Lafayette's 1678 novel *La Princesse de Clèves*. Like *The Massacre of Paris* and *The Duke of Guise*, the novel is set in sixteenth-century France. Although Collington and Collington (2002, pp.196-226) assume Lee used the original French edition as his source, it is more likely that he used the anonymous 1678 English translation *The Princess of Cleve* ('Rendered into English by a Person of Quality, at the Request of some Friends'), as Van Lennep (1933, p.385-386), Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968]), Vol.2, p.149) and Hume (1976a, p.123) assert. The novel, which was much admired by contemporary readers for its psychological insight, is set in the court of Henri II of France and portrays the emotional turmoil of the eponymous protagonist. She is tormented by unconsummated love for the dashing Duke Nemours but is already married to the older, staid Prince of Cleve. The jealous Prince tricks his wife into admitting the identity of the man she loves, then dies of a broken heart. Nemours proposes marriage to the widowed Princess, but, wracked with guilt at her emotional infidelity, she refuses him and instead commits herself to a life of piety and seclusion.

Lee, infuriated by the ban upon *The Massacre of Paris*, takes this affecting tale and perverts it deliberately: '[T]his Farce, Comedy, Tragedy or meer Play, was a Revenge for the Refusal of the other' (*Cleve*, dedicatory epistle, ll.12-13). *The Princess of Cleve* follows the main narrative of Lafayette's novel faithfully. However, while the Prince and Princess retain their

lofty courtliness, the noble Nemours is transformed by Lee into a rampantly priapic pansexual who 'leaps' anything with a pulse. His outrageously rakish behaviour is depicted onstage with gusto, as he seduces ('your Grace has a cunning Tongue', *Cleve*, I.ii.22) and gropes ('I protest my Lord, I vow and swear, but you'll / make me run to a Whore', *Cleve*, I.ii.162-163) his way through society. Lee aims to shock his audience by confounding its expectations of a typically overblown courtly tragedy: 'when they expected the most polish'd Hero in Nemours, I gave 'em a Ruffian reeking from Whetstone's-Park [a notorious haunt of prostitutes]' (*Cleve*, dedicatory epistle, ll.14-15). Lee compares his antihero gleefully to the rakes portrayed by his contemporaries: they 'are but Copies of his Villany' (*Cleve*, dedicatory epistle, ll.17-18). However, he implies that London audiences are themselves so irredeemably depraved that such debauched behaviour simply blends into the background: '[Nemours] lays about him like the Gladiator [a well-endowed nude statue] in the [St. James's] Park; they may walk by, and take no notice' (*Cleve*, dedicatory epistle, ll.18-19).

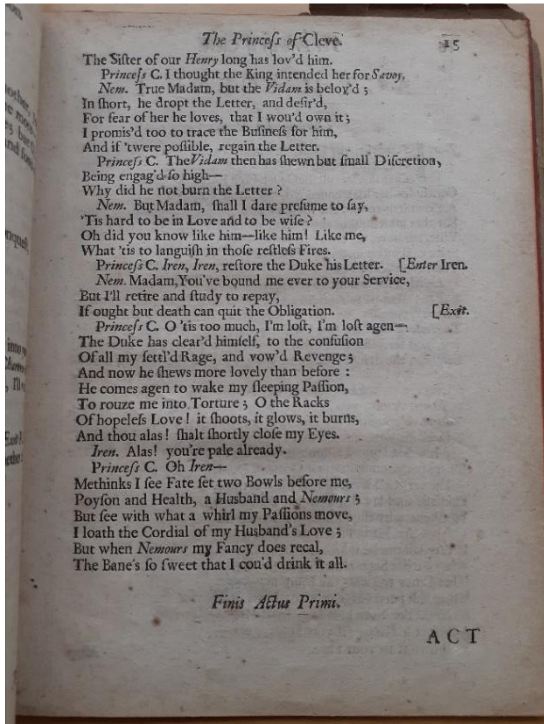
The specific target of Lee's 'Revenge' is unclear in the dedicatory epistle to *The Princess of Cleve*. Interpreting Lee's parts of *The Duke of Guise* as the expression of a drastic political *volte-face* from Whig to Tory, Hume (1976a, pp.117-138) argues that the 'moral flux' of *The Princess of Cleve* is a symptom of Lee's resultant 'spiritual turmoil'. Armistead (1979, pp.155-161) suggests that Lee attacks the fashionable libertines of the English Court in the play. Hume (1976a, pp.127-130) identifies the 'fatally attractive but vicious' Nemours as a satirical portrait of Lee's erstwhile patron, the Earl of Rochester, who mocked the dramatist as a 'hot-brained fustian fool' (Rochester, 1675); Cordner (1995, pp.xxiii-xxxi) explores the play's allusions to Rochester in some detail. Undoubtedly, with its unapologetically predatory protagonist (''tis the way of ye all, only you sneak with it under your Cloaks like

Taylors and Barbers; and I, as a Gentleman shou'd do, walk with it in my hand', *Cleve*, II.iii.34-36), the play presents a savagely clearsighted portrait of rakish behaviour. However, Lee could have chosen to write an original satire on this subject with a London setting, using typical Restoration comedy tropes such as stock figures and characters whose names signal their personae. (In *The Princess of Cleve*, the only such characters are the pert wives Celia and Elianor and Nemours's 'Ganymed' (*Cleve*, II.iii.1) Bellamore.) Yet, instead, Lee takes a celebrated French romance rooted in historical events and turns it into a sexually explicit comedy. As shown in previous chapters, Lee adapts his sources judiciously. His corruption of Lafayette's novel is therefore unlikely to have been done on a whim. Discussing the adaptation, Armistead (1979, pp.150-152) argues that in creating new characters to supplement those in Lafayette's novel, Lee takes the Catholic military leader St. Andre and the Huguenot assassin Poltrot, both notable figures from French history, and refashions them as clueless fops embroiled in absurd sexual antics to imply 'ominous disharmony between politico-religious and socio-moral allegiances'. Conversely, Collington and Collington (2002, pp.217-220) argue that Lee 'invents very little' in his portrayal of St. Andre and Poltrot and their wives, crediting the dramatist with extensive biographical knowledge of minor figures from French history. However, it is likely that both of these interpretations are mistaken. Although *The Princess of Cleve* is set thirty years before the events dramatized in *The Massacre of Paris*, as Cordner (1995, p.365, n.32) observes, 'Lee often seems to be imagining the action as occurring perhaps a decade or two later' ('What if / Paris were a fire, the President and Council of sixteen at the door!', *Cleve*, I.i.30-31). This suggests that Lee remained preoccupied with *The Massacre of Paris* while writing *The Princess of Cleve*. Thus a more straightforward explanation for the portrayal of serious historical figures as sex-mad buffoons is that, utilising the common history behind the two plays, Lee turned once again to

Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France* for his supporting characters; St. Andre and Poltrot appear in the Second and Third Books of that work. In *The Massacre of Paris*, which is based mainly upon the Third Book of Davila's *History*, Poltrot is identified by Guise as the murderer of his father ('By damn'd Poltrot so villainously slain', *Massacre*, I.i.135), a figure far from the ridiculously inept would-be rake of *The Princess of Cleve*. As discussed in Section 2.6, *The Massacre of Paris* was banned before its first performance after the intervention of the French ambassador, Paul de Barillon. By ridiculing historical figures from the French Wars of Religion in this way, Lee mocks de Barillon's attempt to preserve his country's reputation by suppressing Lee's play on that subject. More generally, Lee's outrageous debasement of Lafayette's popular quasi-historical portrayal of the French court mocks the culture de Barillon represents. Thus, in *The Princess of Cleve*, his 'Revenge for the Refusal' of *The Massacre of Paris*, Lee satirises multiple targets of his scorn, from London society and its most notorious rake to the French ambassador who suppressed the tragedy Lee had crafted with such care.

It is not known when *The Princess of Cleve* was staged. Downes (1708 [1987], p.80) says only that it appeared at Dorset Garden, 'being well Acted, but [it] succeeded not so well as the others [Lee's *Theodosius*, *Gloriana* and *Nero*]'. Hume (1976a, p.119) and Cordner (1995, p.xxii) date it to 1682, but Knutson (1988, p.169), Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.149) and Van Lennep (1933, p.383) date it to 1680 from the text's repeated allusions to the death of the Earl of Rochester ('Count Rosidore') in July of that year. The play has never been revived. *The Princess of Cleve* was not published until 1689, the year after Lee was discharged from Bedlam, having been committed to the asylum for four years. Contrasting sharply with Lee's careful reconstruction of *The Massacre of Paris*, the printed text of *The*

Princess of Cleve is sloppily presented, with apparently no attempt made to replace the material 'borrowed in the Action'. Van Lennep (1933, pp.397-398) notes that in the final scene, when 'the audience must have been in a state of keen expectancy' over the impending showdown between Marguerite and Nemours, the Duke merely asks her for 'but six words in Private' (*Cleve*, V.iii.276) then announces their betrothal twenty-two lines later after the onstage reconciliation of the fops and their wives. Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.151) note that, in addition to minor typesetting errors throughout the text, the 'stage directions are often faulty', with characters entering or exiting in the wrong place, or not at all, and 'speeches are not infrequently assigned to the wrong character'. As Bowers (1950) discusses in detail, the most serious compositor's error occurs in II.i. In some copies of Q1, Act I ends on $C4^{r}$ and Act II begins on $C4^{v}$. $D1^{r}$ repeats $C4^{r}$, while $D1^{v}$ presents an alternative opening to Act II (see Figures 4.1 – 4.4). This omits a thirteen-line speech by Marguerite but includes another four lines spoken by her, plus the exit of Nemours and the Vidam of Chartres, and a speech by Tournon which leads into $D2^{r}$. Some copies of Q1 omit D1 completely, thus losing some of the text (Van Lennep, 1933, p.395; Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.151).

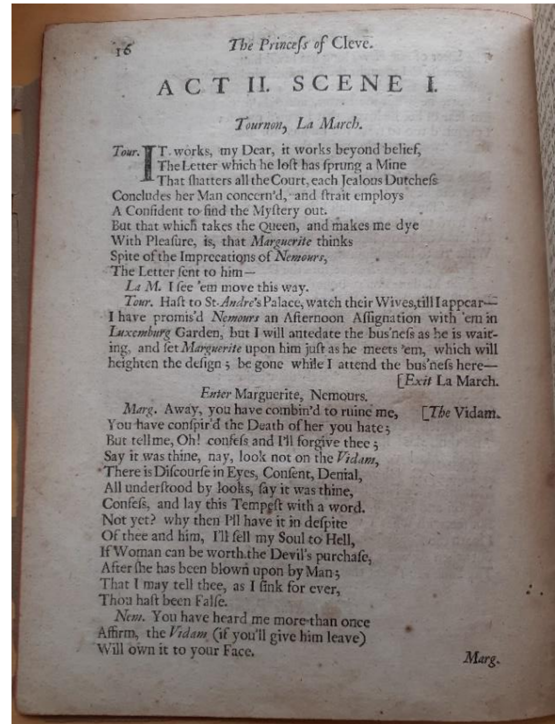

The Princeſs of Cleve. 15

The Siſter of our *Henry* long has lov'd him.
Princeſs C. I thought the King intended her for *Savoy*.
Nem. True Madam, but the *Vidam* is belov'd;
In ſhort, he dropt the Letter, and deſir'd,
For fear of her he loves, that I wou'd own it;
I promis'd too to trace the Buſineſs for him,
And if 'twere poſſible, regain the Letter.
Princeſs C. The *Vidam* then has ſhewn but ſmall Diſcretion,
Being engag'd ſo high—
Why did he not burn the Letter?
Nem. But Madam, ſhall I dare preſume to ſay,
'Tis hard to be in Love and to be wiſe?
Oh did you know like him—like him! Like me,
What 'tis to languiſh in thoſe reſtleſs Fires.
Princeſs C. *Iren, Iren*, reſtore the Duke his Letter. [*Enter* Iren.
Nem. Madam, You've bound me ever to your Service,
But I'll retire and ſtudy to repay,
If ought but death can quit the Obligation. [*Exit.*
Princeſs C. O 'tis too much, I'm loſt, I'm loſt agen—
The Duke has clear'd himſelf, to the confuſion
Of all my ſettl'd Rage, and vow'd Revenge;
And now he ſhews more lovely than before:
He comes agen to wake my ſleeping Paſſion,
To rouze me into Torture; O the Racks
Of hopeleſs Love! it ſhoots, it glows, it burns,
And thou alas! ſhalt ſhortly cloſe my Eyes.
Iren. Alas! you're pale already.
Princeſs C. Oh *Iren*—
Methinks I ſee Fate ſet two Bowls before me,
Poyſon and Health, a Husband and *Nemours*;
But ſee with what a whirl my Paſſions move,
I loath the Cordial of my Husband's Love;
But when *Nemours* my Fancy does recal,
The Bane's ſo ſweet that I cou'd drink it all.

Finis Actus Primi.

ACT

Figure 4.1: *The Princess of Cleve* (1689), Q1, C4r (author's own collection)


16 *The Princeſs of* Cleve.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Tournon, La March.

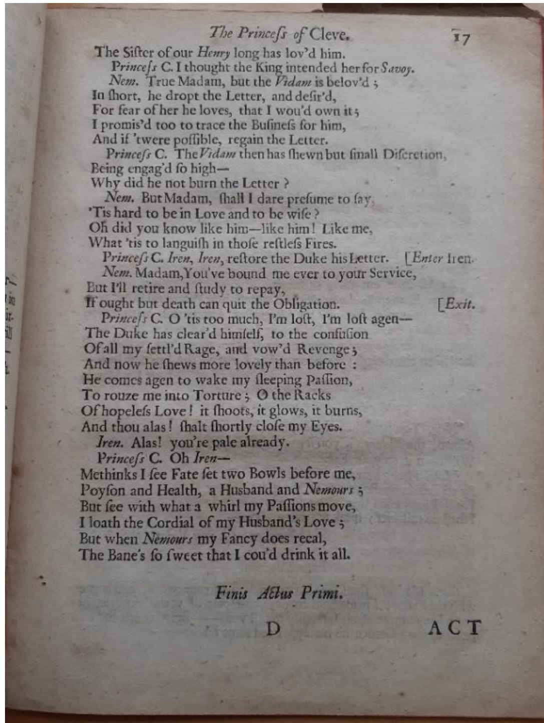
Tour. IT works, my Dear, it works beyond belief,
The Letter which he loſt has ſprung a Mine
That ſhatters all the Court, each Jealous Dutcheſs
Concludes her Man concern'd, and ſtrait employs
A Confident to find the Myſtery out.
But that which takes the Queen, and makes me dye
With Pleaſure, is, that *Marguerite* thinks
Spite of the Imprecations of *Nemours*,
The Letter ſent to him—
La M. I ſee 'em move this way.
Tour. Haſt to St-*Andre*'s Palace, watch their Wives, till I appear—I have promis'd *Nemours* an Afternoon Aſſignation with 'em in *Luxemburg* Garden, but I will antedate the bus'neſs as he is waiting, and ſet *Marguerite* upon him juſt as he meets 'em, which will heighten the deſign; be gone while I attend the bus'neſs here— [*Exit* La March.

Enter Marguerite, Nemours.

Marg. Away, you have combin'd to ruine me, [*The* Vidam.
You have conſpir'd the Death of her you hate;
But tell me, Oh! confeſs and I'll forgive thee;
Say it was thine, nay, look not on the *Vidam*,
There is Diſcourſe in Eyes, Conſent, Denial,
All underſtood by looks, ſay it was thine,
Confeſs, and lay this Tempeſt with a word.
Not yet? why then I'll have it in deſpite
Of thee and him, I'll ſell my Soul to Hell,
If Woman can be worth the Devil's purchaſe,
After ſhe has been blown upon by Man;
That I may tell thee, as I ſink for ever,
Thou haſt been Falſe.
Nem. You have heard me more than once
Affirm, the *Vidam* (if you'll give him leave)
Will own it to your Face.

Marg.

Figure 4.2: *The Princess of Cleve* (1689), Q1, C4v (author's own collection)

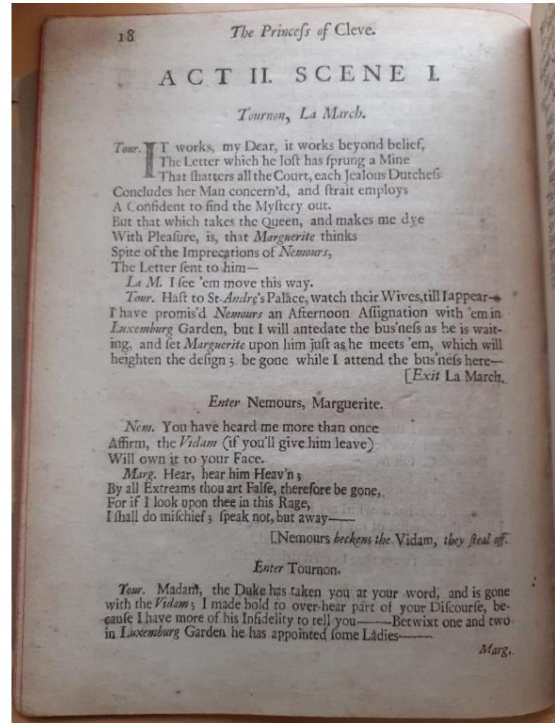

The Princeſs of Cleve. 17

The Siſter of our *Henry* long has lov'd him.
Princeſs C. I thought the King intended her for *Savoy*.
Nem. True Madam, but the *Vidam* is belov'd;
In ſhort, he dropt the Letter, and deſir'd,
For fear of her he loves, that I wou'd own it;
I promis'd too to trace the Buſineſs for him,
And if 'twere poſſible, regain the Letter.
Princeſs C. The *Vidam* then has ſhewn but ſmall Diſcretion,
Being engag'd ſo high—
Why did he not burn the Letter?
Nem. But Madam, ſhall I dare preſume to ſay,
'Tis hard to be in Love and to be wiſe?
Oh did you know like him—like him! Like me,
What 'tis to languiſh in thoſe reſtleſs Fires.
Princeſs C. *Iren, Iren*, reſtore the Duke his Letter. [*Enter* Iren.
Nem. Madam, You've bound me ever to your Service,
But I'll retire and ſtudy to repay,
If ought but death can quit the Obligation. [*Exit.*
Princeſs C. O 'tis too much, I'm loſt, I'm loſt agen—
The Duke has clear'd himſelf, to the confuſion
Of all my ſettl'd Rage, and vow'd Revenge;
And now he ſhews more lovely than before:
He comes agen to wake my ſleeping Paſſion,
To rouze me into Torture; O the Racks
Of hopeleſs Love! it ſhoots, it glows, it burns,
And thou alas! ſhalt ſhortly cloſe my Eyes.
Iren. Alas! you're pale already.
Princeſs C. Oh *Iren*—
Methinks I ſee Fate ſet two Bowls before me,
Poyſon and Health, a Husband and *Nemours*;
But ſee with what a whirl my Paſſions move,
I loath the Cordial of my Husband's Love;
But when *Nemours* my Fancy does recal,
The Bane's ſo ſweet that I cou'd drink it all.

Finis Actus Primi.

D ACT

Figure 4.3: *The Princess of Cleve* (1689), Q1, D1r (author's own collection)


18 *The Princeſs of* Cleve.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Tournon, La March.

Tour. IT works, my Dear, it works beyond belief,
The Letter which he loſt has ſprung a Mine
That ſhatters all the Court, each Jealous Dutcheſs
Concludes her Man concern'd, and ſtrait employs
A Confident to find the Myſtery out.
But that which takes the Queen, and makes me dye
With Pleaſure, is, that *Marguerite* thinks
Spite of the Imprecations of *Nemours*,
The Letter ſent to him—
La M. I ſee 'em move this way.
Tour. Haſt to St-*Andre*'s Palace, watch their Wives, till I appear—I have promis'd *Nemours* an Afternoon Aſſignation with 'em in *Luxemburg* Garden, but I will antedate the bus'neſs as he is waiting, and ſet *Marguerite* upon him juſt as he meets 'em, which will heighten the deſign; be gone while I attend the bus'neſs here— [*Exit* La March.

Enter Nemours, Marguerite.

Nem. You have heard me more than once
Affirm, the *Vidam* (if you'll give him leave)
Will own it to your Face.
Marg. Hear, hear him Heav'n;
By all Extreams thou art Falſe, therefore be gone,
For if I look upon thee in this Rage,
I ſhall do miſchief; ſpeak not, but away——
[Nemours *beckens the* Vidam, *they ſteal off.*

Enter Tournon.

Tour. Madam, the Duke has taken you at your word, and is gone with the *Vidam*; I made bold to over-hear part of your Diſcourſe, becauſe I have more of his Infidelity to tell you——Betwixt one and two in *Luxemburg* Garden he has appointed ſome Ladies——

Marg.

Figure 4.4: *The Princess of Cleve* (1689), Q1, D1v (author's own collection)

In editing the play, Stroup and Cooke and Cordner (1995) follow Bowers in conflating the pages so that none of the material is omitted; Stroup and Cooke's edition of *The Princess of Cleve* is used in this thesis. Van Lennep (1933, pp.393-397) suggests that this scene is one of those edited by Lee to remove material borrowed from *The Massacre of Paris* (see Section 4.2), and hence this may have contributed to the confusion. The lack of any authorial correction to this significant error in the printed text suggests that Lee had little artistic interest in *The Princess of Cleve* at this time. Presumably, his sole motivation for printing the play almost a decade after its performance was financial need; after his release from Bedlam, he wrote no new plays and survived on a small pension from the Theatre Royal (Armistead, 1979, p.24). At this point in his career, Lee's primary aim seems to have been to persuade the Lord Chamberlain to lift the ban on *The Massacre of Paris* and 'approve it to be play'd in its first Figure' (*Cleve*, dedicatory epistle, l.21). Consequently, the printing of *The Princess of Cleve* is important to its author only as a means of advancing the play he called his 'own Child' (*Cleve*, dedicatory epistle, l.9) while making a little money.

Critics of *The Princess of Cleve* tend to fall into two camps: those who appreciate Lee's savage satire on contemporary society and those who recoil in horror. Nicoll (1952, p.147) condemns the play as a 'rotting dung-heap' and Ham (1931 [1969], p.169) notes tartly that '[a]s a play it need not detain us'. While admiring 'the sprightliness and verve [of] Lee's prose' (p.401), Van Lennep (1933, p.400) considers *The Princess of Cleve* to be 'one of the most offensive plays in Restoration comedy', 'its licentiousness… equalled by the obscenity of the language in which it is clothed'. Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.150) feel 'its subplot is excessively coarse, even for Restoration times' yet admit it is 'an interesting piece of social comment'. Hume (1976a, p.133) observes that 'twentieth-century critics have

generally responded with disgust, nausea and revulsion' but believes such a reaction to be 'exactly what Lee want[s]' as he 'debunk[s]' heroic tragedy by associating it with 'degraded sexuality' (pp.135-136). As Hume (1976a, p.137) and Armistead (1979, pp.147-150) note, in *The Princess of Cleve*, Lee presents the rake hero shorn of glamour and held up unsparingly to the light in all his predatory toxicity. Weber (1986, p.74) observes that 'few [other Restoration comedies] so well understand how absolutely destructive of others' rakish behaviour can be. Yet, as Knutson (1988, p.171) and Collington and Collington (2002) assert, such morally bankrupt sexual behaviour is implicit in Lafayette's depiction of the French court. Lee simply makes this explicit, in every sense, to mock the 'Drinking, Scowring, Roaring, Whoreing' (*Cleve*, I.ii.136-137) English culture which looks to France to set its fashions.

With its jaded portrayal of a world in which everyone and everything is sexualised ('when you were little Girls of Seven, you were so wanton, your Mothers ty'd your hands behind you', *Cleve*, IV.i.115-117) and its mockingly self-aware antihero ('the Heroick Vein comes upon me', *Cleve*, IV.i.260-261), *The Princess of Cleve* seems a curious choice of vehicle for Lee to revisit his strongly emotive exploration of the consequences of sectarian violence. Yet, as the reconstruction of the non-extant performance text of *The Princess of Cleve* in Section 4.2 will show, in writing his 'Revenge for the Refusal' Lee exploits parallels between Lafayette's novel and *The Massacre of Paris* which render his banned play ideal for adaptation into a new, if unlikely, form.

4.2 Reusing *The Massacre of Paris* in *The Princess of Cleve*

In writing *The Princess of Cleve*, Lee adapts Lafayette's source novel using a similar approach to his adaptation of Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France* in *The Massacre of Paris* (see Chapter 2). He follows the main sequence of events faithfully but changes characterisation drastically in order to create particular theatrical effects. In *The Princess of Cleve*, he alters the characterisation of Nemours so markedly as to shift the genre of the work from tragedy to comedy. The play consists of three intertwined subplots: the love triangle between the Princess, her husband and Duke Nemours, taken from Lafayette's novel; the sparring of Nemours and his disguised mistress Marguerite as she seeks revenge for his infidelity; and the antics of the fops Poltrot and St. Andre and their witty wives, in whom Nemours takes an amorous interest. Lee states that the play, 'when it was Acted, in the Character of the Princess of Jainville, had a resemblance of Marguerite in the Massacre of Paris' (*Cleve*, dedicatory epistle, ll.1-2), therefore the 'borrowed' material 'left out in the Print' (*Cleve*, dedicatory epistle, ll.5-6) would have appeared in the second of these subplots. Thus it is probable that, in the original performance text of *The Princess of* Cleve, Lee reuses material from *The Massacre of Paris* to contribute to his radical reimagining of the gallant hero Nemours as a scandalously debauched rake. Using close analysis, this section will compare the printed texts of *The Massacre of Paris* and *The Princess of Cleve* to determine which parts of Lee's earlier play may have been reused, how these may have been integrated with the new work and how they may have contributed to shifting the genre of the play from tragedy to comedy.

As Cordner (1995, p.xxiii) observes, Lee 'overlays Lafayette's original triangle [Nemours, the Princess and the Prince of Cleve] with another, consisting of the Princess, Nemours and

Marguerite'. In doing so, Lee shows the same storyline playing out twice: once as tragedy, as the Prince's jealousy leads to his death, and once as comedy, with Nemours overcoming Marguerite's jealousy to make her his wife. In creating the comic triangle, Lee exploits parallels which exist between Lafayette's novel and the period of French history dramatized in *The Massacre of Paris*. In Lafayette's novel, Nemours intends to marry the Princess after the death of her husband (1678 [1688], pp.242-243). An analogous situation occurs in *The Massacre of Paris*. Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France* (1678, p.173) recounts that, offended by Charles IX's refusal to allow him to marry the King's sister, Marguerite of Valois, the Duke of Guise 'resolved to take to Wife *Katherine de Cleves*, Sister to the Dutchess of *Nevers*, and Widow to the Prince of *Porcien*'. Lee uses this detail in his portrayal of Guise's stormy relationship with Marguerite, depicting Guise compelled by the King to leave his sister and marry 'the Widow of the Seasons' (*Massacre*, III.ii.32) or face 'ruine' (*Massacre*, III.ii.21). Therefore, in both *The Massacre of Paris* and Lafayette's novel, a young nobleman (Guise / Nemours) courts a widow of high rank (the Princess of Porcien / the Princess of Cleve). Lee introduces a new character, a scorned lover, to bring the narrative of *The Princess of Cleve* in line with that of *The Massacre of Paris*: a young nobleman (Guise / Nemours) spurns his mistress (Marguerite of Valois / Marguerite of Jainville) to court a widow of high rank (the Princess of Porcien / the Princess of Cleve). This allows Lee to insert a subplot from *The Massacre of Paris* into *The Princess of Cleve*: Catherine de Medici (the Queen Mother / Queen of France) makes Marguerite of Valois / Marguerite of Jainville jealous to separate her from her secret fiancé (Guise / Nemours) in order to marry her to another, and (Guise / Nemours) becomes jealous when he learns of Marguerite of Valois / Marguerite of Jainville's new suitor. Lee's intention to exploit the parallels and embed this duplicated storyline into *The Princess of Cleve* is indicated by the only surviving example of

reworked text in the play. In *The Massacre of Paris*, Marguerite responds to the Queen Mother's claims of Guise's infidelity with 'I love him more / Than you love Glory, Vengeance, and Ambition' (*Massacre*, III.i.8-9). The phrasing of this sentence is echoed at the start of *The Princess of Cleve* when Tournon's confidante La March learns of Catherine de Medici's plan to separate Marguerite of Jainville from her lover: 'But how is't possible to work the Princess from the / Duke Nemours, who loves him as the Queen affects Ambition?' (*Cleve*, I.i.58-59). Thus it is likely that the text cut from the printed version of *The Princess of Cleve* would also have related to the jealousy subplot borrowed from *The Massacre of Paris*.

In *The Massacre of Paris*, the Queen Mother stokes Marguerite's obsessive jealousy by informing her that Guise 'scorns' her and 'is betroth'd / To… the Prince of Porcien's Widow' (*Masssacre*, III.i.12-14). Lee expands this idea in *The Princess of Cleve* with an elaborate plan which unites the jealousy plot from *The Massacre of Paris* with a plot device from Lafayette's novel, while at the same time setting in motion a bawdily comic subplot. The Queen, who remains offstage throughout the play, 'designs to rob' (*Cleve*, I.i.51) Nemours of his mistress, Marguerite, because her son '[t]he Dauphin loves her too' (*Cleve*, I.i.54). As the immoral connotations of 'rob' imply, the Queen's plan is underhand and corrupting. Knowing that 'Nemours his Soul is bent / Upon variety' (*Cleve*, I.i.60-61), she commands her lady in waiting Tournon to 'Sacrifice [her] Honour' (*Cleve*, I.i.62) to Nemours and 'become his Bawd, … ply[ing] him ev'ry day / With some new face, to wean his heart / From Marguerite's Form' (*Cleve*, I.i.63-65). The focus on 'face' and 'Form' indicates early in the play that Nemours is more interested in women's bodies than romantic love. Tournon's actions as procuress by royal command initiate the farcical subplot in which a double-booked

Nemours ('Hell! can't I be in two places at once?', *Cleve*, IV.i.264) sends his male lover Bellamore to deputise for him in bed with St. Andre's wife Elianor, to the chagrin of Poltrot, who sought to cuckold St. Andre himself and who, on returning home, finds his own wife Celia in bed with the Vidam of Chartres. Lee entwines this bawdy subplot with the device, drawn from Lafayette's novel, of an incriminating letter passed to the Queen. Originally, the letter is dropped by the Vidam who, wishing to conceal the identity of his mistress from the jealous Queen-Dauphin, asks Nemours to own it, which grieves the infatuated Princess of Cleve (Lafayette, 1678 [1688], pp.114-153). Lee reframes the incident to strengthen the jealousy plot taken from *The Massacre of Paris*, which suggests that this, rather than Lafayette's tale, forms the dominant narrative of *The Princess of Cleve*. Instead of belonging to the Vidam, the letter 'dropt… / Out of Nemours his Pocket' (*Cleve*, I.i.68-69) and Tournon and her friend La March 'Slily… insinuate with Marguerite' (*Cleve*, I.i.71) that the note from 'some abandon'd Mistress' (*Cleve*, I.i.72) belongs to the Duke ('abandon'd' having a double meaning implying sexual disinhibition). Nemours's response to the Queen's machinations completes the shift from the tragedy of the source novel to the comedy of the play. Jealous of his rival, though less from love than from a possessiveness that treats women as commodities ('the Dauphin begins to buz about her agen… he may nick the time and buy her – I like not that', *Cleve*, IV.iii.6-8), he attempts to inflame Marguerite's jealousy still further by wooing the widowed Princess in order to win his mistress back:

NEMOURS: …tell her the Prince of Cleve's
Death has wrought my Conversion, I grow weary of my wild Courses,
repent of my Sins, am resolv'd to leave off Whoreing and marry his
Wife.
(*Cleve*, V.ii.8-11)

Naturally, the arch seducer Nemours succeeds in securing Marguerite, bringing *The Princess of Cleve* to a traditional comic close with a wedding. However, the play's neat conclusion of

reconciled couples is undermined by the exact correlation between Nemours's lies to ensnare Marguerite and his final speech to the assembled company:

NEMOURS: For my part, the Death of the Prince of Cleve, upon second thoughts, has so truly wrought a change in me, as nothing else but a Miracle cou'd – For first I see, and loath my Debaucheries – Next, while I am in Health, I am resolv'd to give satisfaction to all I have wrong'd; and first to this Lady [Marguerite], whom I will make my Wife before all this Company e'er we part.
(*Cleve*, V.iii.294-299)

Thus Nemours offers both his onstage and offstage audiences glib assurances of repentance which are as empty, Lee asserts in the play's final couplet, as the dying Earl of Rochester's apparent repudiation of his own rakish behaviour (Hume, 1976a, p.129): 'He well Repents that will not Sin, yet can, / But Death-bed Sorrow rarely shews the Man' (*Cleve*, V.iii.302-303). Hence Lee embellishes and expands the 'jealous lovers' subplot from *The Massacre of Paris* to convert Lafayette's tragic novel into a play which slily subverts the conventions of Restoration comedy to comment acerbically upon contemporary society.

No manuscripts of any of Lee's plays are known to have survived, so there is no record of the performance text of *The Princess of Cleve* as it was staged c.1680. However, as Van Lennep (1933, pp.392-398) and Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.151) observe, the printed text of *The Princess of Cleve* displays evidence of cuts which were made to the performance text when Lee reclaimed material 'borrowed' from *The Massacre of Paris* in 1689 ('What was borrowed in the Action is left out in the Print, and quite obliterated in the minds of Men', *Cleve*, dedicatory epistle, ll.5-6). The most obvious of these cuts occur in II.i, the location of the compositor's error described in Section 4.1 above, and in V.iii, when the expected set piece showdown between Nemours and Marguerite is instead merely 'but six words in private' (*Cleve*, V.iii.276), with Nemours's announcement of their approaching nuptials

following twenty-two lines later. Van Lennep argues that each cut corresponds to a different part of *The Massacre of Paris*, with the argument between Guise and Marguerite in *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii, inserted into *The Princess of Cleve*, II.i, (Van Lennep, 1933, pp.396-397) and the 'farewell meeting' between the lovers in *The Massacre of Paris*, V.i, inserted into *The Princess of Cleve*, V.iii (Van Lennep, 1933, pp.397-398). However, this is not supported by the texts. Although Van Lennep (1933, p.398) claims that 'the situation… is similar' in the latter case, allowing transference of an entire scene, this is not the case. In *The Massacre of Paris*, at their final meeting Marguerite rejects Guise's love ('farewel, thou Ruine of my Glory: / Farewel, thou strong Seducer of my Youth', *Massacre*, V.i.203-204), yet *The Princess of Cleve* ends with Marguerite agreeing to marry Nemours. It is more likely that, rather than inserting material from roughly corresponding points in the earlier play, instead Lee concentrates on reusing material from *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii, not only in *The Princess of Cleve*, II.i, as Van Lennep suggests but also in V.iii, as Hume (1976a, p.127, n.16) proposes. In *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii, Marguerite attacks Guise furiously for his infidelity in engaging himself to the widowed Princess of Porcien, only for him to throw her accusations back in her face with claims that she has 'plaid [him] foul' (*Massacre*, III.ii.76) with Navarre. When they realise that the King and Queen Mother have been playing them off against each other, they are reconciled rapturously. The exchange lasts just 116 lines yet encapsulates the entire trajectory of the jealousy subplot in *The Princess of Cleve*, from recrimination to reconciliation. Thus it is most likely that Lee divided material from *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii, between *The Princess of Cleve*, II.i and V.iii, in order to create a narrative arc which spans the entire play. Original material written for *The Princess of Cleve* bridges the intervening three acts by expanding upon the lovers' volatile relationship while aligning with the requirements of the narrative laid out in *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii.

Enraged by Nemours's infidelity, Marguerite embarks on an elaborate plot to humiliate him by disguising herself as a masked *femme fatale*. Nemours is enamoured of his mistress's witty alter ego and, on learning her true identity, is determined to win her back from the Dauphin. This establishes mutual grounds for jealousy and thus prepares for a set piece confrontation and subsequent reconciliation at the end of the play such as that presented in *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii.

Examination of *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii, demonstrates how the material in this scene dovetails with the printed text of *The Princess of Cleve* to create a dramatically coherent narrative which may resemble the comedy as it was staged originally. As discussed above, the first significant cut to the performance text of *The Princess of Cleve* comes in II.i. This scene marks the start of Nemours's onstage interactions with the enraged Marguerite. In *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii marks the first meeting of that play's lovers since Marguerite learnt of Guise's apparent infidelity. The common theme of lovers meeting antagonistically suggests that Lee would have drawn suitable material from this part of his earlier play to reuse in his new work. In this part of *The Massacre of Paris*, Marguerite and Guise bicker in a quickfire manner that is echoed in the 'wit-combats' (Cordner, 1995, p.xxiii) that occur between the other Marguerite and Nemours throughout *The Massacre of Paris*:

MARGUERITE: Look in my Face.
GUISE: I do.
MARGUERITE: Nay, in my Eyes.
GUISE: I view 'em as I would the setting Sun,
Were I to dye at Midnight.
MARGUERITE: Come, you dare not.
GUISE: What, dare not dye?
MARGUERITE: Thou dar'st not one, nor t'other:
At least thou shouldst not, for thou art so wicked,
So gone in Sin, Damnation must attend thee.
GUISE: Why, then the Devil is sure of one great Man.
(*Massacre*, III.ii.47-53)

Transferring this passage into the bawdy atmosphere of *The Princess of Cleve* would draw out the sexual connotations of the double meaning of 'dye' (*Massacre*, III.ii.49-50) implicit in the original text. The register of this exchange between Guise and his mistress is in keeping with that of Marguerite's first speech to Nemours in *The Princess of Cleve*, which accuses him of being the recipient of the incriminating lost letter:

MARGUERITE: Away, you have combin'd to ruine me,
You have conspir'd the Death of her you hate;
But tell me, Oh! confess and I'll forgive thee;
Say it was thine, nay, look not on the Vidam,
There is Discourse in Eyes, Consent, Denial,
All understood by looks, say it was thine,
Confess, and lay this Tempest with a word.
Not yet? why then I'll have it in despite
Of thee and him, I'll sell my Soul to Hell,
If Woman can be worth the Devil's purchase,
After she has been blown upon by Man;
That I may tell thee, as I sink for ever,
Thou hast been False.
(*Cleve*, II.i.16-28)

With her hyperbole and abrupt shifts in mood ('You have conspir'd the Death of her you hate; / But tell me, Oh! confess and I'll forgive thee', *Cleve*, II.i.17-18), Marguerite displays the histrionic, attention-seeking temperament established by her predecessor throughout the earlier play ('farewel. [*Marguerite going out*]… [*returning*] What, no endearments at so sad a parting!', *Massacre* I.i.48-52). The passages in both plays assert that truth lies in visual rather than verbal communication ('Look in my Face… Nay, in my Eyes', *Massacre*, III.ii.47; 'There is Discourse in Eyes, Consent, Denial, / All understood by looks', *Cleve*, II.i.20-21), suggesting continuity between them. Similarly, in *The Massacre of Paris*, Guise asserts arrogantly that if he is damned 'the Devil is sure of one great Man' (*Massacre*, III.ii.53). This is complemented by Marguerite's willingness in *The Princess of Cleve* to be likewise damned ('I'll sell my Soul to Hell', *Cleve*, II.i.24) if it means she can condemn Nemours for his infidelity as she descends to the underworld and/or falls from grace ('as I sink for ever',

Cleve, II.i.27). Hume (1976a, pp.123-138) and Armistead (1979, pp.147-150) assert that *The Princess of Cleve* is an attack on rakish behaviour, and here men are presented as inherently corrupting, the merest breath, let alone physical contact, able to ruin women: 'If Woman can be worth the Devil's purchase, / After she has been blown upon by Man', *Cleve*, II.i.26). Combining these passages from the two plays for performance would, therefore, produce a witty battle of the sexes which explores contemporary morality and sets in motion the jealousy subplot which spans *The Princess of Cleve*.

As discussed above, the other significant cut to the performance text of *The Princess of Cleve* is likely to have occurred at the end of V.iii, as indicated by the unexpectedly abrupt conclusion to the Nemours-Marguerite jealousy plot. The greater part of the confrontation between Guise and Marguerite in *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii, would fit well here. Lee prepares the ground in the previous scene of *The Princess of Cleve* as Nemours outlines his plan to manipulate Marguerite into a reconciliation:

NEMOURS: I'll lay the Dauphin in her dish,
nose her in the Tiptoe of her Pride, Railing, Lying, Laming, Hanging,
Drowning, Dying, and she comes about agen.
(*Cleve*, V.ii.28-30).

This plan parallels the development of *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii, exactly, as shown below. In that scene, Marguerite and Guise are reconciled after a quarrel in which childish mutual accusations of infidelity are exchanged. These evoke the absurdity which is to the fore in *The Princess of Cleve*:

MARGUERITE: Hark Guise, hear Monster, hear and mark me:
While to thy Conscious Soul I sound the name
Of Porcien.
GUISE: Of Navarre.
MARGUERITE: Porcien I swear.
GUISE: Navarre, Navarre.
MARGUERITE: Thou ly'st, thou ly'st: Porcien, the Widow – Porcien.
(*Massacre*, III.ii.98-102)

As is central to the comedy of *The Princess of Cleve*, in *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii, the genders are set at odds. Guise characterises women as emotionally insubstantial and changeable, light as air compared to the solid ideal of masculinity, and thus implicitly the inferior sex:

GUISE: For, know, I hate more perfectly than you;
Yours is a gust, a puff of Woman's Fury;
But mine a manly, constant, setled hate.
(*Massacre*, III.ii.112-114)

This misogyny is concentrated still further in an exchange Van Lennep (1933, p.305) describes as 'sparkling', as Guise coolly portrays the female sex as the epitome of iniquity:

MARGUERITE: Impostor!
GUISE: Woman.
MARGUERITE: Traytor.
GUISE: Woman.
MARGUERITE: Villain.
GUISE: Woman still.
(*Massacre*, III.ii.96-97)

Such polarised dialogue would transfer easily from tragedy to comedy, being certain to provoke a partisan reaction from the audience.

The theme of sexual deception permeates all parts of *The Princess of Cleve* and is foregrounded similarly in *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii. Guise counters Marguerite's allegations of falsehood by turning the tables, accusing her of lies and infidelity: 'You bear the Guilt, who bring the Accusation: / Yes, Marguerite, thou hast plaid me foul' (*Massacre*,

III.ii.75-76). He then seems to accuse her of faking orgasms (‘Your Languishings, your very height of Pleasures, / Your grasping Joys are false’, *Massacre*, III.ii.87-88) before condemning her instead for insatiable sexual greed (‘for even then / When you cry out, There can be nothing farther, / By all your perjuries, you wish ’em more’, *Massacre*, III.ii.88-90). Guise thus traduces Marguerite while implicitly insisting that his own sexual potency is not at fault. In *The Princess of Cleve*, Nemours’s masked new mistress gains his approval with a spectacular performance in bed (‘Thou Ebbing, Flowing, Ravishing, Racking Joy’, *Cleve*, IV.i.153) and makes him swear to leave Marguerite before revealing that she herself is his ‘dear Domestick she’ (*Cleve*, IV.i.175). She rejects both Nemours and the sexual double standards of a society in which promiscuous self-professed ‘Men of Quality’ (*Cleve*, IV.i.194) and ‘Sense’ (*Cleve*, IV.i.209) ‘vaunt[…] despotick Pow’r’ (*Cleve*, IV.i.209) over the wives they consider ‘Whore[s]’ (*Cleve*, IV.i.212) and infect them with sexually transmitted diseases (‘Let me not hear you ask my sickly Lady, / Whither she found Obstructions at the Waters’, *Cleve*, IV.i.227-228). Marguerite swears that she will ‘try the Joys of Life’ (*Cleve*, IV.i.193) like the philandering Nemours. This open declaration of female sexual desire in *The Princess of Cleve*, IV.i would thus allow Guise’s accusation of his lover’s insatiability in *The Massacre of* Paris, III.ii to be spoken by Nemours in *The Princess of Cleve*, V.iii.

Because Lee has built parallels with *The Massacre of Paris* into the structure of *The Princess of Cleve*, only minimal alterations would be needed to reinvent the quarrel between Guise and his mistress in *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii, to produce a quarrel between Nemours and *his* mistress in *The Princess of Cleve*, V.iii, while retaining both the meaning of the text and its narrative function. This is shown below, highlighting the gist of the relevant changes; it is not possible to determine how Lee may have altered the text to preserve the metre. (Note that Lee

refers to ‘Cleve’ in III.ii.123; as discussed above, historically, the widowed Princess of Porcien was Katherine of Cleves before her marriage, so the text needs no alteration at this point.)

<u>GUISE</u> [NEMOURS]: Thus then in short, and so farewell for ever:
<u>The King and Queen</u> [The Queen], with all particulars
Avow’d it to me; and in general
The Court. You may perceive the Choice,
I made of <u>Cleve</u>, was more to be reveng’d
Than want of Constancy: but your’s was weigh’d;
<u>Navarre</u> [The Dauphin] has youth, and <u>may</u> [will] be King of France.
(*Massacre*, III.ii.119-125)

Similarly, by basing one character on another through this shared narrative, Lee ensures that Marguerite’s bitter diatribe against her rival would need little emendation:

MARGUERITE: O, I could cut my face! what, for a Widow!
Leave me for <u>Porcien</u> [Cleve]! O thou dull, dull <u>Guise</u> [Nemours]!
Wilt thou sit down to the refuse of Meals!
A Widow! what, the Monument of Man;
The Tomb Grave-Vault, the very Damp of Nature!
(*Massacre*, III.ii.103-107)

The hysteria and the contemptuous representation of Marguerite’s love rival as the personification of decay and death in *The Massacre of Paris* are equally in keeping with the volatile persona and the situation of the other Marguerite in *The Princess of Cleve*.

The reconciliation of the lovers in *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii, is an overwrought verbal spectacle which infects Guise with Marguerite’s attention-seeking sadomasochistic diction (see Section 2.5), symbolising their romantic union:

MARGUERITE: But take, O take this Ponyard from my hand,
And stick it in my heart, the heart that loves you,
That when ’tis injur’d dares not stand before you,
But owns you for the Tyrant of my days.
GUISE: No, Marguerite, no;
You’ve found the way to temper me indeed,
Nay, turn it upon me, who am a Traytor,
Because I dar’d to counterfeit a Falshood

Against such perfect Love, to seem t'affect
The hated Porcien.
(*Massacre*, III.ii.150-159)

The homogenising of Guise and Marguerite deepens as the reconciliation reaches its climax in a flurry of rapture. Their speeches are continuous across the first three iambs of line 163, echoing each other's diction:

MARGUERITE: O let me then embrace you.
Yet closer. O that I could get within you!
GUISE: My Life!
MARGUERITE: My Soul!
GUISE: My Heart!
(*Massacre*, III.ii.161-163)

Marguerite initiates sexualised contact ('let me then embrace you'), taking on the masculine, dominant role while the ruthless revenger Guise is feminised by his romantic exclamations. However, Marguerite's desire to 'get within' Guise goes beyond sexual and physical possibility (Stern, 2021b). It expresses yearning for complete possession in the supernatural sense, her wish for her spirit to invade and occupy his frame. The imagery of such an implicitly eroticised merging of bodies and souls would be a fitting culmination of the jealousy plot in *The Princess of Cleve*, V.iii. However, as Collington and Collington (2002, p.223, n.81) observe, earlier in that play Lee undermines the pathos of a similarly highly emotive passage, the final parting of the Princess of Cleve and her dying husband ('Away to Bed, yet love my Memory', *Cleve*, IV.iii.155), by spoofing it in the following scene. The doltish fop Poltrot and his spirited wife Celia slip into an end-rhymed verse parody of heroic tragedy in which the elevated ideal of a union made by holy vows fails to withstand the earthy prose reality of married life:

CELIA: But am I not thy Wife? Let that attone –
POLTROT: My Dear Damn'd Wife, I do confess thou art
Flesh of my Flesh, and Bone too of my Bone,
Wou'd mine had all been broke when first thou wert.
CELIA: Why then I'll cringe no longer, heark you Sir, leave off your

> Swelling and Frowning, and awkward ambling, and tell me in fine, whether you'll be reconcil'd or no, for I am resolv'd to stoop no longer to an ungrateful Person.

(*Cleve*, V.i.48-55)

This satirical undercutting of the conventions of heroic tragedy would prime the audience to see the ludicrous aspect of a reconciliation between Nemours and Marguerite in V.iii modelled on *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii, thus forming a suitably comic spectacle with which to end *The Princess of Cleve*.

Hence there is evidence throughout *The Princess of Cleve* that Lee 'borrowed' not just the 'resemblance' of Marguerite from *The Massacre of Paris*, but the entire jealousy subplot which characterises the relationship between Marguerite and Guise in the earlier play. It can be seen that Lee constructs his new play around the narrative arc presented in *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii, from the lovers' mutual recriminations to their reconciliation. This forms the central axis of *The Princess of Cleve*, uniting and driving all other parts of that play's narrative. If the reconstruction of the lost performance text of *The Princess of Cleve* proposed in this section is correct, the recycling of material from *The Massacre of Paris* is the means by which Lee alters the characterisation of Nemours significantly from that of the hero of Lafayette's source novel, linking heroic tragedy with obscene farce to create a biting satire which functions on multiple levels. The narrative framework built around the jealousy subplot from *The Massacre of Paris* remains intact even though Lee later removes the recycled passages. Thus, despite the excision of the speeches from the printed text, the reused material from *The Massacre of Paris* remains intrinsic to *The Princess of Cleve* and its radical shift from the genre of Lafayette's *La Princesse de Clèves*.

4.3 Conclusion

As Lee's only comedy, *The Princess of Cleve* is an anomaly among his plays. Lafayette's tale of thwarted passion and noble self-sacrifice seems to provide perfect material for one of the overwrought emotive tragedies in which Lee specialises. By transforming the novel into bawdy farce instead, he wrongfoots his audience by confounding its expectations. This deliberate departure from his established dramatic style forms part of Lee's 'Revenge for the Refusal' of *The Massacre of Paris*. The conversion of the elegant romance *La Princesse de Clèves* is achieved through the reuse of material from *The Massacre of Paris*. As shown in Chapters 2 and 3, in his adaptations of Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France* and *The Massacre of Paris*, Lee considers textual meaning to be essentially fluid. In this chapter, it has been shown that it is likely that Lee demonstrated this once again in *The Princess of Cleve* by reframing serious speeches to highlight their inherent absurdity, making only minimal alterations to the text. As Section 4.2 has shown, the 'jealous lovers' subplot narrated by the recycled text is integrated fully into the overall structure of *The Princess of Cleve*. It unites the courtly and farcical plots, allowing Nemours to straddle all parts of the play, moving smoothly between his love triangle with the Prince and Princess and chaotic bed-hopping with the fops and their lustful wives. Thus, in *The Princess of Cleve*, the reused material from *The Massacre of Paris* forms the mechanism which converts tragedy into comedy, making Lee's banned play the instrument of revenge for its refusal. In this way, Lee achieves, quite literally, poetic justice.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This thesis has examined Nathaniel Lee's *The Massacre of Paris* and Lee's subsequent reuse of its text in *The Princess of Cleve* and his parts of *The Duke of Guise*. It has been shown that Lee's original play is more complex and nuanced than many critics have claimed, and that his repurposing of the work goes beyond the straightforward transference of speeches from one play to another. In both *The Duke of Guise* and *The Princess of Cleve*, Lee uses material from *The Massacre of Paris* to create the mechanism by which the characterisation, narrative arc and genre of the plays' respective sources are shifted radically. This chapter will discuss Lee's reasons for choosing to recycle *The Massacre of Paris* in this way. It will then reflect upon Lee's distinctive dramatic style and argue that all three plays contribute to his ongoing exploration of the possibilities of the Restoration stage.

Previous chapters have presented a critical re-evaluation of all three plays. Chapter 2 has shown that, despite its reputation as a one-dimensional propaganda piece, Lee crafts *The Massacre of Paris* carefully to create a powerful and moving tragedy. He adapts his main source, Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France*, in an imaginative and contradictory manner to create a multifaceted, highly emotive drama which addresses contemporary fears of Catholic plots. At the same time, Lee foregrounds the inherent resemblance of a turbulent period of French history to the blood-stained spectacle and catharsis of Early Modern revenge tragedy. Initially suppressed through the intervention of the French ambassador, *The Massacre of Paris* had a significant influence upon Lee's later work. Although the reuse of its text in his parts of *The Duke of Guise* has been considered evidence of a shift in Lee's

political beliefs, as Chapter 3 has shown, this is not the case. Instead, the resultant changes to the narrative and characterisation established in Lee's source, Davila's *History*, serve to recreate the emotional orchestration of *The Massacre of Paris* in the new play. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, in *The Princess of Cleve* Lee also reuses text from *The Massacre of Paris* to make a significant departure from his source material. He constructs the play on the jealousy subplot borrowed from his earlier work in order to convert Lafayette's delicate romantic novel into a robust and bawdy comedy.

Having thus established in Chapters 2 – 4 how Lee reuses *The Massacre of Paris* in his later works, Section 5.2 will survey Lee's career over the decade between the writing of the play and its first staging in order to determine why he chose to recycle the text as he did. Section 5.3 will then conclude the thesis by reflecting on how *The Massacre of Paris*, *The Princess of Cleve* and *The Duke of Guise* demonstrate Lee's ambition to transform Restoration theatre.

5.2 *The Massacre of Paris* and Lee's subsequent career

In order to study Lee's methods as a dramatist, this thesis has considered the plays out of chronological order, examining *The Massacre of Paris* and Lee's parts of *The Duke of Guise* in detail before applying the knowledge of Lee's adaptation technique gained in Chapters 2 and 3 to reconstruct the no-longer-extant performance text of *The Princess of Cleve* in Chapter 4. Having investigated how Lee wrote the plays, this section will now consider why he did so and why *The Massacre of Paris* played such a significant role in the later years of his career.

Examining the plays in chronological order, it can be seen that, firstly, after the banning of *The Massacre of Paris*, Lee reuses material from the play to create a new work in a different genre, *The Princess of Cleve*. He then reuses further text from *The Massacre of Paris* in his parts of *The Duke of Guise*, essentially to recreate *The Massacre of Paris* in a form acceptable to the Lord Chamberlain. But why does Lee choose to reuse material in these unusual ways, rather than writing two entirely new plays? Lee wrote all three plays in the five years leading up to his admission to Bedlam in 1684, persuading the Lord Chamberlain to overturn the ban on *The Massacre of Paris* five years later after his release. Therefore, one explanation for the reuse of material could be that, initially, Lee wished not to waste good material but then became obsessed with *The Massacre of Paris* as his mental health deteriorated, brooding on the ban and feeling compelled to return to the work over and over until he could bring it triumphantly to the stage. Without documentary evidence, it is impossible to say whether Lee's worsening mental health may have contributed towards his apparent obsession with restoring *The Massacre of Paris* to its original form. However, the wider context of these plays does not support this interpretation. It is more likely that Lee's decisions to reuse the text were made rationally in response to his changing circumstances.

As discussed in Section 4.2, a parallel exists between the plot of Lafayette's novel and events described in Davila's *The History of the Civil Wars of France*. It is likely that reading the English translation of the novel and observing this parallel gave Lee the idea of reusing the 'jealous lovers' subplot from *The Massacre of Paris* as the means of converting Lafayette's poignant popular novel into a bawdy comedy as a 'Revenge for the Refusal' of his earlier work. As Armistead (1979, pp.150-151) notes, historically, several of the characters in *The Massacre of Paris* are connected to those in Lafayette's novel: the Duke of Guise married the

Prince of Cleve's sister, the widowed Princess of Porcien, and the Duc de Nemours became Guise's step-father after the assassination of the previous Duke of Guise (Horowitz, 2000, p.170). The Duke of Guise appears in the early chapters of *La Princesse de Clèves* as the Prince of Cleve's rival for the hand of the Princess. Had Lee wished to draw heavily upon *The Massacre of Paris*, he could have built his adaptation around this love triangle rather than around the love triangle featuring the Prince, the Princess and Nemours. The fact that he did not do so suggests that he was not fixated on the subject of *The Massacre of Paris* or on the characters it depicts. Rather, Lee simply wished to make use of the banned text rather than waste it and chose his recycled material judiciously to suit his new project. Subsequently, Lee's decision to reuse material from *The Massacre of Paris* in *The Princess of Cleve* affected the way that he wrote his parts of *The Duke of Guise*. Although Lee wanted apparently to recreate *The Massacre of Paris* in his collaboration with Dryden, he had already used much of the material relating to the key relationship between Guise and Marguerite in *The Princess of Cleve*, as discussed in Chapter 4. This meant that, in order to recreate the emotional orchestration of *The Massacre of Paris* in *The Duke of Guise*, he needed to write new material which replicated the narrative shape of the original play, as discussed in Chapter 3. Thus the choices Lee made in reusing material from *The Massacre of Paris* in *The Princess of Cleve* and *The Duke of Guise* were not eccentric whims or the result of obsession but a practical and imaginative response to changing circumstances as he sought to bring plays to the stage. Furthermore, in addition to *The Princess of Cleve* (staged c.1680) and *The Duke of Guise* (staged 1682), Lee wrote several other plays between the banning of *The Massacre of Paris* c.1679 and its eventual staging ten years later: *Caesar Borgia* (c.1679/1680), *Theodosius* (1680), *Lucius Junius Brutus* (1681) and *Constantine the Great* (1684). Of these, only *Caesar Borgia* reuses a small amount of material from *The Massacre of Paris*. As discussed

in Section 2.5, the poisoned gloves Machiavel uses to kill Adorna in that play are taken from Davila's factual account of the assassination of the Queen of Navarre, a scene omitted from the printed version of *The Massacre of Paris* (1690). This incident fits well into the anti-Catholic, mock-Jacobean bloodbath *Caesar Borgia*. As in *The Princess of Cleve*, this is an example of Lee reusing apt material judiciously. Had Lee been obsessed with *The Massacre of Paris*, further traces of the play would be seen throughout Lee's later works beyond the recycled material in *Caesar Borgia*, *The Princess of Cleve* and *The Duke of Guise*, but this is not the case. Instead, it is more likely that Lee's reuse of *The Massacre of Paris* was driven by a mixture of pragmatism, artistic pride and financial need.

By examining the performance and print history of Lee's plays in the last decade of his career, it is possible to recreate the sequence of events which led him to reuse material from *The Massacre of Paris* in subsequent plays. As discussed above, in 1679, needing a speedy replacement for *The Massacre of Paris* to cash in on the Popish Plot before the hysteria subsided, Lee borrowed a murder from his banned play to spice up *Caesar Borgia*, a crowd-pleasing Grand Guignol portrayal of murderously sinful Catholic priests. Despite its topicality, *Caesar Borgia* had little success at the box office (Stroup and Cooke, 1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.67). In his following play, *The Princess of Cleve* (c.1680), Lee continued his magpie pilfering of his own work, exploiting parallels between history and Lafayette's source novel to expand one scene of *The Massacre of Paris*, III.ii, to create the axis around which the new play's comedic and tragic subplots revolve. Lee may have relieved his hurt feelings by writing his 'Revenge for the Refusal' of *The Massacre of Paris*, but, commercially and critically, *The Princess of Cleve* was a flop. With two unsuccessful plays following the banning of *The Massacre of Paris*, Lee's finances will have been decidedly rocky. His next

play, *Theodosius* (1680), however, met with considerable critical and popular acclaim (Stroup and Cooke, 1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.231). Downes (1708 [1987], p.80) describes it as ‘a living and Gainful Play to the Company’. This monetary success extended to the play’s author, thanks to timely and influential patronage by the Duchess of Richmond, who was lady-in-waiting to Charles II’s queen, Catherine of Braganza. Lee expressed his gratitude: ‘You brought Her Royal Highness just at the exigent Time, whose single Presence on the Poet’s day is a Subsistence for him all the Year after’ (*Theodosius*, 1680, dedicatory epistle, ll.26-28). The attendance of ‘Her Royal Highness’ and her entourage on the benefit day which provided the play’s writer with a share of the profits would have boosted Lee’s income, not just in ticket sales for that performance but by generating positive publicity for any later performances. However, Lee’s next tragedy, *Lucius Junius Brutus* (1681), failed to repeat this success. With its apparent celebration of republicanism, the play was banned six days after its first performance (Stroup and Cooke, 1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.317) for ‘very Scandalous Expressions & Reflections upon ye Government’ (National Archives, 1680-1683, p.28).

With four of his last five plays having failed, Lee will have struggled to make ends meet. Hence it is unsurprising that in 1682 Lee called in a favour from John Dryden (‘After the writing of Oedipus, I pass’d a Promise to joyn with him in another; and he… claim[ed] the performance of that Promise’, Dryden, 1683, p.3) in order to repackage *The Massacre of Paris* as *The Duke of Guise*. The reworking of the text three years after it was prohibited indicates that, at that time, Lee held no hope of getting the ban on *The Massacre of Paris* lifted. The existing parallels between events in French history and the emotional parallels which Lee created between the narratives of the two plays allowed him to reuse a significant

amount of material from *The Massacre of Paris* and thus bring *The Duke of Guise* to the stage quickly to earn money. Dryden's position as Poet Laureate should have guaranteed that the play would reach the poets' day and refill Lee's empty pockets. However, it was Lee's misfortune that Dryden chose to make his contribution to *The Duke of Guise* a weapon in his ongoing feud with the Whigs. As discussed in Section 3.1, politically the text was so incendiary that the first performance of the play was delayed by the Lord Chamberlain for five months until Monmouth and his followers had been quelled. This delay must have added to Lee's financial difficulties, and the uproar that greeted the play's eventual performance would hardly have gratified his hope that association with Dryden would help his career. Only Dryden's account of the controversy, in *The Vindication*, has survived. Lee was oddly silent during the furore; there is no existing documentary evidence to show that he defended either the play or his aims in writing it at that time or afterwards, or to indicate his feelings on the matter.

When *The Princess of Cleve* was eventually printed, about nine years after its performance, Lee wrote a new prologue and epilogue to replace those written by Dryden for the play's original run. Kewes (1998, pp.174-175) describes this as a 'calculated erasure of his association with Dryden' as Lee 'reclaim[s]' *The Massacre of Paris* 'both literally and metaphorically' and 'returns [it] to its original, untainted, pre-collaborative state'. However, although Lee may have been demonstrating his political convictions, it is equally likely that he was acting pragmatically in an attempt to gain patronage and thus financial security. Throughout his career, his precarious living caused him to make continual efforts to ingratiate himself with the wealthy and influential. The praise he lavished upon potential patrons in the paratext of his plays led one contemporary to dub him 'dedicating Lee' (anonymous, 'A Satyr

upon the Poets', 1703, p.143). Whatever Lee's private opinions, his poverty meant that his allegiance was always to money and power rather than to any political cause or religion. Throughout his career, Lee courted both the Catholic and Protestant sides of the Stuart dynasty, addressing poems to James II ('To the Duke on his Return', 1682) as well as to James's daughter Mary and her husband, William of Orange ('To the Prince and Princess of Orange, upon their Marriage', 1677 [1693]; 'On their Majesties Coronation', 1688). By the time of the printing of *The Princess of Cleve* in 1689, the Catholic convert Dryden had been ousted as Poet Laureate, having refused to swear the oath of allegiance to England's new Protestant rulers, William and Mary. Having written two plays with Dryden, it would have been important for Lee to disassociate himself from his former collaborator if he were to have any hope of receiving patronage from the new regime. It is clear that the printing of *The Princess of Cleve* was not driven by artistic concerns; as discussed in Section 4.1, Lee did not bother to edit or revise the text for clarity after excising passages from *The Massacre of Paris*. Instead, the purpose of printing *The Princess of Cleve* was threefold. Firstly, it served as an immediate source of income from sales of the play. Secondly, it lobbied for a future source of income from the staging of *The Massacre of Paris* ('I beg your Lordship to… approve it to be play'd in its first Figure', *Cleve*, dedicatory epistle, ll.19-21), which was now no longer controversial in its criticism of France and of Catholicism. Thirdly, it distanced Lee publicly from Dryden, the perfidious Tory corruptor of innocent texts ('I hope the Object [the future staging of *The Massacre of Paris*] will display Treachery in its own Colours', *Cleve*, dedicatory epistle, ll.11-12). Thus the printed text of *The Princess of Cleve* presents Lee as a loyal – and hopeful – candidate for patronage from the Crown. The attendance of the Queen and her ladies-in-waiting at the opening of *The Massacre of Paris* in November 1689 suggests that this strategy paid off.

Although Lee had strong financial reasons for persuading the Lord Chamberlain to permit the performance of *The Massacre of Paris*, it is clear that artistic pride was also a factor. Lee's decision in 1682 to recreate *The Massacre of Paris* in *The Duke of Guise* at a time when he needed a successful play suggests that he believed that *The Massacre of Paris* was a good play with the potential to do well at the box office. It also suggests that Lee considered the work to be a timeless tragedy rather than a topical play alluding to the Popish Plot of 1679. Lee's decision to restore the play to its original form seven years after *The Duke of Guise* suggests that he still believed it to have strong commercial potential. It also suggests that Lee did not think that the prospects of *The Massacre of Paris* would be harmed by some scenes having been staged previously in another tragedy. By contrast, the material 'borrowed' from *The Massacre of Paris* in performance was omitted from the printed text of *The Princess of Cleve*. This implies that Lee did not want to jeopardise the ability of *The Massacre of Paris* to move an audience by undermining it with his own parody of its love scenes. Despite having reused a significant amount of the text in *The Princess of Cleve* and *The Duke of Guise*, Lee had either retained the original manuscript from ten years previously or was able to recreate it from memory. Unlike the clumsy editing of *The Princess of Cleve*, the excision of the poisoned gloves murder used in *Caesar Borgia* was done with care for the integrity of *The Massacre of Paris* as a whole. Thus, having been 'forc'd to limb [his] own Child' (*Cleve*, dedicatory epistle, l.9) by adverse circumstances, at the first favourable opportunity Lee took action to bring *The Massacre of Paris* to the stage in as close to its original form as possible. His perseverance with the play over the span of a decade suggests that he considered it one of his most accomplished works.

The staging of *The Massacre of Paris* in 1689 marked the end of Lee's career as a dramatist. As far as is known, his career as a poet ended that same year, with the publication of an elegy in memory of his fellow dramatist Aphra Behn, in which he revealed his unrequited love for her ('I lov'd thee inward, and my Thoughts were true… Thou hadst my Soul in secret, and I swear / I found it not, till thou resolv'dst to Air', 'On the Death of Mrs. Behn', 1689, ll.7-10). Some critics have assumed that Lee's deteriorating health prevented him writing any substantial new works after his release from Bedlam in 1688 (Ham, 1931 [1969], pp.218-220; Stroup and Cooke, 1955 [1968], Vol.1, p.17). Armistead (1979, p.25) concedes that, with no extant written records, it is impossible to know whether Lee wrote at all during or after his time in the asylum. However, it is clear from Lee's own writing that he became increasingly disillusioned with his vocation during the decade between the banning of *The Massacre of Paris* and its eventual staging. Lee's money worries are reflected in the paratext of *Theodosius*, which was written in 1680 after the banning of *The Massacre of Paris* and the failure of *Caesar Borgia* and *The Princess of Cleve*. Foreshadowing Lee's own future eerily, the play's prologue observes that playwrights invariably meet a sad end due to their poverty ('Tasso ran mad, and noble Spencer starv'd', *Theodosius*, 1680, prologue, l.36). The epilogue is a mordantly cynical and jaded observation on Lee's vocation ('Thrice happy they that never writ before', *Theodosius*, 1680, epilogue, l.1) which argues that, to live, dramatists must compromise their artistic vision. Though they may start out full of youthful braggadocio 'Like some new Captain of the City Bands' (*Theodosius*, 1680, epilogue, l.3), 'wise Poets' must become 'Prostitutes upon the Stage' (*Theodosius*, 1680, epilogue, ll.33-34) who are forced to pander to the whims of their audience to earn money ('Your wills alone must their performance measure, / And you may turn 'em ev'ry way for pleasure', *Theodosius*, 1680, epilogue, ll.37-38). However, Lee chafed at restrictions upon his creativity and persisted in

forging his own idiosyncratic dramatic style rather than giving in and writing more commercially, despite the hardship this entailed. According to his contemporary Wycherley (1704, p.301), Lee's 'Frantic Poetry[…] / Kept [him] still, in much more Necessity' yet, rather than conform, he would 'most madly starve [him]self, for Fame'. By 1683, Lee had become worn down by following his muse. In the prologue to *Constantine the Great*, staged in that year, once again he laments the poverty of writers and their struggle for patronage. He portrays the 'Creature Poet' (*Constantine*, 1684, prologue, l.5) as 'hated… and unfed' (l.13) vermin akin to 'Rats in Ships' (l.12), whose predecessors were failed by the indifference of wealthy patrons ('Tell 'em how Spencer starv'd, how Cowley mourn'd, / How Butler's Faith and Service was return'd', ll.35-36). Lee's disillusionment with his career seems total, as he compares literature to excrement and recommends that all would-be scribblers should be discouraged by being punished like unruly curs:

> With Hands behind them see the Offender ty'd,
> The Parish Whip, and Beadle by his side.
> Then lead him to some Stall that does expose
> The Authors he loves most, there rub his Nose;
> Till like a Spaniel lash'd, to know Command,
> He by the due Correction understand,
> To keep his Brains clean, and not foul the Land.

(*Constantine*, 1684, prologue, ll.39-45)

The imagination and inventiveness in which Lee once gloried have become faults to be suppressed: 'Till he against his Nature learn to strive, / And get the Knack of Dullness how to thrive' (*Constantine*, 1684, prologue, ll.46-47). After this bitter outburst, it is unsurprising that *Constantine the Great* was the last play that Lee wrote.

Thus it was not that Lee lost the ability to write after his confinement in Bedlam, as some critics claim; his occasional poems of 1689 and the careful restoration of *The Massacre of Paris* demonstrate that he could still write when he so chose. Rather, having at last achieved

the sustaining ambition of vindicating his 'own Child', it seems that Lee simply gave up the struggle to survive as a writer after the staging and printing of *The Massacre of Paris*.

5.3 Lee the innovator

This thesis has explored the inventive and subtle ways in which Lee salvaged the text of *The Massacre of Paris* after it was banned by repurposing it to fit new narratives, both tragic and comic. This versatility has been underappreciated by many critics, and since his debut as a playwright Lee has had a reputation as an undisciplined writer of uncontrolled rant. However, as this section will show, Lee's opinion of himself as an experimental dramatist is justified by the unconventional approach that he takes in writing *The Massacre of Paris*, *The Princess of Cleve* and *The Duke of Guise*.

Lee is noted for the unrestrained emotional speeches and exaggerated imagery of his plays. His contemporaries linked Lee's bombastic style to his mental illness, creating the lasting stereotype of 'Nat Lee the Mad Poet'. Writing in the year of Lee's committal to Bedlam, Wood (1684, p.112) noted in his diary that 'Nathaniel Lee the playmaker endeavouring to reach high in the expression of his plays broke his head and fell distracted'. Dryden saw Lee's character reflected in his work:

> Another [poet], who had a great *Genius* for *Tragedy*, following the fury of his natural temper, made every Man and Woman too in his *Plays* stark raging mad: there was not a sober person to be had for love nor money. All was tempestuous and blustering; Heaven and Earth were coming together at every word; a meer Hurrican from the beginning to the end, and every Actour seem'd to be hastning on the Day of Judgement.

(Dryden, 1695, pp.xxxix-xl)

Yet to assume that Lee's madness and his dramatic style are intrinsically linked suggests that Lee had no control over the way in which he wrote. This is not the case. This thesis has

shown that Lee constructed his plays in a manner that was carefully planned. Though his style could be lurid, he could moderate this when he so chose; Stroup and Cooke (1955 [1968], Vol.2, p.5) praise the 'rant-shorn dialogue' of the 'tense, effective' *The Massacre of Paris*. Lee made a conscious choice to write in a style that was markedly different to that of his peers, despite it not always making commercial sense to do so. Before poverty bred disillusion, Lee took a bullish stance against his critics, implying that they were old, boring and unimaginative:

> It has been often observed against me, That I abound in ungovern'd Fancy; but I hope the World will pardon the Sallies of Youth: Age, Despondence, and Dulness come too fast of themselves.

(*Theodosius*, 1680, dedicatory epistle, ll.55-58)

He was aware that his emotional pyrotechnics were not to everyone's taste, but defiantly celebrated his own daring attempts to break new dramatic ground:

> I discommend no Man for keeping the beaten Road; but I am sure the Noble Hunters that follow the Game, must leap Hedges and Ditches sometimes, and run at all, or never come in to the fall of the Quarry.

(*Theodosius*, 1680, dedicatory epistle, ll.58-61)

This bold declaration of his willingness to go beyond conventional boundaries in pursuit of the new suggests that the extravagance of Lee's writing was a conscious artistic decision rather than the side-effect of declining mental health.

The three plays studied in this thesis each display a different aspect of Lee's experimental approach to playwriting. Lee's most acclaimed plays, *The Rival Queens* (1677), *Theodosius* (1680) and *Lucius Junius Brutus* (1681), all demonstrate the successful marriage of verbal and visual spectacle with finely calibrated emotional intensity anchored firmly in complex characterisation. By crafting the text to elicit a particular reaction from the audience by overwhelming them with sensation, Lee creates deeply enjoyable immersive theatre, the

blockbusters of the Restoration stage. In *The Massacre of Paris*, Lee develops this technique further by moving from his usual classical settings to sixteenth-century France. In doing so, he dramatizes events which occurred just beyond living memory. Lee's strategic use of minute historical detail imbues the play with vivid realism which blurs the boundary between history play and the Restoration equivalent of a dramatized documentary. The emotions evoked in the audience are therefore heightened by their awareness that they are watching a dramatic representation of real events in which people in circumstances not dissimilar to their own suffered and died. *The Massacre of Paris* functions on multiple levels simultaneously. On one level, it is a dramatization of historical events. On another, it is a play about religious faction which reflects contemporary concerns about the internal threat to England posed by Catholicism. On a third level, it is a moving tragedy which explores the dichotomy that exists between love and 'Glory, Vengeance and Ambition' (*Massacre*, III.i.9) through its manifestation in all of the play's main characters. These layers of meaning combine to give *The Massacre of Paris* a richness and complexity which combine with Lee's strong command of emotional orchestration to make this perhaps his greatest dramatic achievement. Although the play's genesis was troubled, its eventual success on stage in 1689 and its subsequent revivals over the next fifty years demonstrate that, ultimately, Lee's faith in his work was vindicated.

While *The Massacre of Paris* demonstrates Lee's ongoing attempts to create tragedies which maximise the emotional response of the audience, *The Princess of Cleve* and *The Duke of Guise* demonstrate his lateral thinking and inventiveness. His unusual treatment of the plays suggests that he approached the construction of these works in the manner of one solving a problem. In *The Princess of Cleve*, Lee wishes to create a play which shocks the audience

and mocks his enemies. He displays ingenuity by reusing components of *The Massacre of Paris* to engineer a change in the genre of the work from the tragedy of his source to outrageously offensive comedy. There is a playfulness about this process, as Lee displays self-awareness and irreverence towards his own work, gleefully mocking the inherent absurdity of the emotive heroic tragedies which made his name. In *The Duke of Guise*, Lee wishes to recreate the emotional orchestration of *The Massacre of Paris*. He does so by reusing other components of *The Massacre of Paris* to build the framework around which he creates his parts of *The Duke of Guise*, thus ensuring that it echoes the desired dramatic structure. In order to follow faithfully the historical narrative presented by Davila, Lee redeploys text in ways which either preserve or transform meaning, utilising the melodramatic technique of prioritising spectacle over characterisation. Thus both *The Princess of Cleve* and *The Duke of Guise* are imaginative experiments with form in which Lee reverse engineers *The Massacre of Paris* and rearranges its pieces in order to create or recreate dramatic works. Therefore it is clear that *The Massacre of Paris*, *The Princess of Cleve* and *The Duke of Guise* all demonstrate Lee's determination to take Restoration theatre in new directions, 'leap[ing] Hedges and Ditches' (*Theodosius*, 1680, dedicatory epistle, ll.59-60) in his ongoing pursuit of artistic excellence.

Few Restoration dramatists have divided critical opinion as much as Nathaniel Lee. Some see him as a ranting madman, others acclaim him. Lee was one of the most popular playwrights of the Restoration stage, a writer who knew exactly what his audience wanted and delivered it with panache. While the quality of his plays is too inconsistent for his career to attain true greatness, nevertheless Lee is one of the foremost dramatists of the late seventeenth century, and certainly one of the most intriguing. His innovative and unorthodox approach to

playwriting is showcased in the three plays examined in this thesis. *The Massacre of Paris* is a superb example of his experiments in taking baroque theatre to new levels of sensation, while *The Princess of Cleve* and *The Duke of Guise* demonstrate his ingenious ability to exploit the fluidity of textual meaning which arises from the subordination of character to spectacle. Like the characters in his most successful works, as a writer Lee is complex and contradictory. His unconventional and inventive plays are a fascinating and thrilling combination of the sublime and the ridiculous.

In dedicating *The Rival Queens* (1677) to the Earl of Mulgrave, Lee likens impoverished poets to creatures believed to live on air and critical acclaim to sustenance sent from heaven:

> Praise is the greatest encouragement we Camelions can pretend to, or rather the Manna that keeps Soul and Body together; we devour it as if it were Angels Food, and vainly think we grow Immortal.

(*The Rival Queens*, dedicatory epistle, ll.80-82)

Neglected and unfashionable for over two centuries, Lee is richly deserving of scholarly reappraisal and a spectacular return to the stage. It is time to grant this singular, contrary but always rewarding dramatist the immortality for which he yearned.

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